

LIVES OF INDIAN OFFICERS.

LIVES
OR
INDIAN OFFICERS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HISTORY
OF THE CIVIL AND MILITARY SERVICES OF INDIA.

BY JOHN WILLIAM KAYE.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN," "THE LIFE OF LORD MACKENZIE,"
"THE HISTORY OF THE SEPPOY WAR," &c. &c.
AND

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

LONDON:
A STRAHAN AND CO., LUDGATE HILL;
AND
BELL AND DALDY, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN

LONDON

PRINTED BY C WHITTING, BLAUFORP HOUSE, STRAND

10

GENERAL

SIR GEORGE POLLOCK,

G.C.B., G.C.S.I.,

AND

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

SIR JOHN MAIR LAWRENCE, BART.,

G.C.B., G.C.S.I.,

THE MOST DISTINGUISHED LIVING REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE

MILITARY AND CIVIL SERVICES OF THE EAST
INDIA COMPANY,

THESE VOLUMES ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

PREFACE.



I THINK that something should be said regarding the circumstances, which have resulted in the publication of this book.

Two or three years ago, I was invited by the editor and by the proprietor of *Good Words* to write a series of biographical papers illustrative of the careers of some of our most distinguished “Indian Heroes.” As the materials, in most instances, were not to be obtained from printed books or papers, to perform this task in a satisfactory manner—that is, to write month after month, throughout the year, a memoir of some soldier or statesman distinguished in Indian history—would have been impossible to one, the greater part of whose time was devoted to other duties, if it had not chanced that for many years I had been gathering, from different original sources, information relating both to the public services and the private lives of many of those whose careers it was desired that I should illustrate. I had many large manuscript volumes, the growth of past years of historical research, full of personal correspondence and biographical notes, and I had extensive collections of original papers, equally serviceable, which had not been transcribed. As, therefore, only to a very limited extent, I had to go abroad in search of my materials,

I felt that I might accept the invitation and undertake the task, God willing, without danger of breaking down. The temptations, indeed, were very great—the greatest of all being the opportunity of awakening, through a popular periodical counting its readers by hundreds of thousands, the interests of an immense multitude of intelligent people, whom every writer on Indian subjects is painfully conscious of being unable to reach through the medium of bulky and high-priced books.

Of the Lives, which I selected for illustration, the greater number had never been written before, and of those, which had been written before, I had unpublished records which enabled me to impart some little freshness to my memoirs. The sketches were published originally without any chronological arrangement. They appeared, in uninterrupted succession, during the year 1865. The great difficulty with which I had to contend was the necessary limitation of space. I was often compelled to curtail the memoirs after they were in print, and thereby to exclude much interesting illustrative matter. As, however, the republication of the Lives in a separate work had been determined upon, I had less regret in effecting these mutilations. The excised passages are now restored, and new additions made to the memoirs, considerably exceeding in extent the whole of the original sketches. I may say, indeed, that the work has been almost entirely re-written, the chapters in the periodical having been little more than sketches of the more finished portraits which are now produced after fifteen additional months of conscientious research.

Of the materials, of which I have spoken, something more should be said, the more especially, as in one or two instances I have to acknowledge the assistance that I have derived from other writers. For much of the valuable information contained in the memoir of Cornwallis I am indebted to Mr. Ross's very ably-executed work. It should be stated, however, that long before his book was announced I had contemplated the preparation of a Life of Lord Cornwallis, and had amassed a considerable stock of materials in illustration

of it. In 1850, I wrote to Lord Braybrooke, soliciting permission to consult the records of the Cornwallis family, and I received in reply a very courteous refusal—which, indeed, as I was wholly unknown in England at that time, I ought to have expected—accompanied with a statement that a prohibition had been laid upon the publication of these family papers. I was rejoiced to find afterwards that the prohibition had been removed, and that the editing of the correspondence had been placed in such good hands. I believe, however, that the student of Mr. Ross's book may find something new in my slender memoir; and, at all events, for reasons stated at its commencement, there is a peculiar fitness in its insertion in this work, which the reader will be well disposed to recognise. The Lives of Sir John Malcolm and Sir Charles Metcalfe I had already written in detail, but I felt that two such names could not be excluded from my muster-roll. For a memoir of Mr. Elphinstone I had a considerable mass of original memorials, but no amount of correspondence in my possession would have rendered me wholly independent of the very able and interesting biography communicated by Sir Edward Colebrooke to the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*. The well-known volumes of Sargent and Wilberforce, illustrative of the life of Henry Martyn, have of course yielded the chief materials on which the brief memoir of that Christian hero is based; but from the correspondence of Charles Grant the elder, made over to me by his son, the late Lord Glenelg, I have been able to glean something to impart a little novelty to this the most familiar chapter of my work.

The memoirs in the second volume are all written from original materials supplied to me by relatives or friends. The journals and correspondence of Sir Alexander Burnes were given to me by his brother, the late Dr. James Burnes, and much supplementary information has been derived from other sources. The journals of Eldred Pottinger were obtained for me from his family, when I was writing the History of the War in Afghanistan, by the assistance of Captain William

Eastwick, now of the Indian Council, who was one of Sir Henry Pottinger's most cherished friends and associates ; and the journals of Arthur Conolly came into my possession when I was writing the same work. From the families of both I have received very valuable assistance since I commenced the preparation of these volumes. With D'Arcy Todd and Henry Lawrence, officers of the Bengal Artillery, I had the privilege of being on terms of cherished friendship. For the memoir of the former abundant materials were supplied to me by his brother, Colonel Frederick Todd ; and for that of the latter I have chiefly relied on my own private resources, knowing that Sir Herbert Edwardes is writing a life of his great and good friend, which will leave nothing unsaid that ought to be said about him. Following out the list in chronological sequence, I then come to the memoirs of those two great soldiers who died so nobly for their country just as Fame was dawning upon them—Neill and Nicholson. From the widow of the one and from the mother of the other I received the memorials which have enabled me to write, very imperfectly, I fear, the lives of those heroic men ; but an opportunity may yet be allowed to me, in another work, of doing further justice to soldiers who have reflected so much glory on the great Army of the East India Company.

Although to some small extent, perhaps, accidental circumstances may have favoured my choice of these particular Indian worthies, from among so many, I think it will be considered that on the whole they represent the Indian Services as fairly and as completely as if the selection had been wholly the result of an elaborate design.* For it will be seen that I have drawn my examples from all the three great national divisions of the British Empire—that Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen come equally to the front in these pages.

* There is one omission, however, so observable, that something should be said respecting it. It will occasion surprise to many that the name of Sir James Outram does not appear in the list. There is no other reason for this than that he is entitled to a book to himself, and that I hope soon to be able to discharge what is both a trust confided to me by the departed hero, and a promise made to the loving ones whom he has left behind.

Cornwallis, Metcalf, Martyn, and Todd were Englishmen—pure and simple. Malcolm, Elphinstone, Burnes, and Neill were Scotchmen. Pottinger and Nicholson were Irishmen. Ireland claims also Henry Lawrence as her own, and Arthur Conolly had Irish blood in his veins. It will be seen, too, that I have drawn my examples from all the three great presidential divisions of India. Metcalfe, Martyn, Conolly, Todd, Lawrence, and Nicholson were Bengal officers, and served chiefly in that Presidency; Malcolm and Neill came from the Madras Presidency; Burnes and Pottinger belonged to Bombay; whilst Elphinstone, though nominally attached to the Bengal Civil Service, spent the greater part of his official life in Western India. It will be also seen that nearly every branch of the Service is illustrated in these biographies,* and, in the military division, every arm is fairly represented. Todd, Lawrence, and Pottinger were Artillery officers. Arthur Conolly was of the Cavalry. Neill was attached to the European Infantry, and Burnes and Nicholson to the native branch of the same service—in which also Malcolm commenced his career. From all of which it may be gathered that it little mattered whence a youth came, or whither he went, or to what service he was attached; if he had the right stuff in him, he was sure to make his way to the front.

The memoirs being now published in chronological sequence, I am not without a hope that the collection may be regarded in some sort as a Biographical History of India from the days of Cornwallis to the days of Canning. All the great wars which, during those momentous three-quarters of a century, have developed so remarkably the military and political genius of the “Services,” are illustrated, more or less, in these pages. The two great wars with Tippoo, the earlier and later Mahrattah wars, the war in Afghanistan, the Punjab wars, and the Sepoy

* I must express my regret that the volumes contain no example drawn from the Medical Service of the East India Company—a service which was never wanting in men equally eminent for those professional attainments which

are exercised so unstintingly in the cause of our suffering humanity, and for those heroic qualities which are exemplified by deeds of gallantry in the field, and by lives of daring adventure.

war, afford the chief incidents of the book. But the Historical is everywhere subordinated to the Biographical. I have not attempted, indeed, to write History ; it has grown up spontaneously out of the lives of the great men who *make* History. But if it should not be of any value as a History of India, I may still hope that it will be accepted as a not uninteresting contribution to a History of the great Indian Services—the Military and Civil Services of the East India Company. Those Services are now extinct. I have striven to show what they were in their best days ; and unless the ability of the execution has fallen far short of the sincerity of the design, I have done something in these pages to do honour to a race of public servants unsurpassed in the history of the world.

And I hope that, as a record of those services, this book, however imperfect the execution of it, may not be without its uses. I have striven to show how youths, from the middle-class families of our British islands, have gone forth into the great Eastern world, and by their own unaided exertions carved their way to fame and fortune. The Patronage-system of the East India Company, long condemned as a crying abuse, and at last, as such, utterly abolished, opened the gates of India to a hardy, robust race of men, who looked forward to a long and honourable career, and looked back only to think of the joy with which their success would be traced by loving friends in their old homesteads. But it is not now said for the first time that the system could not have been very bad which produced a succession of such public servants as those who are associated with the history of the growth of our great Indian Empire, and as many others who in a less degree have contributed to the sum of that greatness. For the heroes of whom I have written are only representative men ; and, rightly considered, it is the real glory of the Indian Services, not that they have sent forth a few great, but that they diffused over the country so many good, public officers, eager to do their duty, though not in the front rank. Self-reliance, self-help, made them what they were. The “ nepotism of the

Court of Directors" did not pass beyond the portico of the India House. In India every man had a fair start and an open course. The son of the Chairman had no better chance than the son of the Scotch farmer or the Irish squire. The Duke of Wellington, speaking of the high station to which Sir John Malcolm had ascended after a long career of good work accomplished and duty done, said that such a fact "operated throughout the whole Indian service, and the youngest cadet saw in it an example he might imitate—a success he might attain." And this, indeed, as it was the distinguishing mark, so was it the distinguishing merit of the Company's services ; and there grew up in a distant land what has been rightly called a great "Monarchy of the Middle Classes," which, it is hoped for the glory of the nation, will never be suffered to die.

I wish that the youth of England should see in these volumes what men, merely by the force of their own personal characters, can do for their country in India, and what they can do for themselves. I feel that on laying down the book some readers may say that the discouragements are at least as great as the encouragements, for that to a large proportion of those of whom I have written Death came early, and in many instances with sudden violence. But I know too well the temper of the men from whom our armies are recruited to believe that the record of such heroic deaths as those of Todd and Lawrence, Neill and Nicholson, will make any man less eager to face the risks of Indian life.

" Whoe'er has reached the highest pinnacle
Of fame by glorious toil or daring skill,
. . . . let him possess his soul in quietness
And bear his honours meekly , at the last,
E'en gloomy death will have for such a one
Some gleams of brightness, for he will bequeath
To the dear offspring of his heart and race
Their best inheritance—an honoured name "⁴

The deterring circumstances which threaten to impair the

⁴ TREMENHIRE'S PINDAR—a book in simple, manly English, well adapted to which the noble and inspiring thoughts such a theme as the exploits of Heroes of the old Greek poet are rendered in

efficiency of the Services are of a different kind. I am afraid that there has grown up, in these latter days, a general dislike to Indian service, and that those who go out to the East are ever in a hurry to come home again. The “nepotism of the East India Company” had its uses. It was said to be a monstrous thing that the services of the East India Company were, to a great extent, hereditary services, and that whole families should be saddled upon India, generation after generation. We only discovered the good of this after we had lost it. That enthusiasm which is so often spoken of in these volumes as the essential element of success in India, was nourished greatly by these family traditions. The men who went out to India in those old days of the East India Company did not regard themselves merely as strangers and sojourners in the land. They looked to India as a Home, and to Indian service as a Career—words often repeated; but as their repetition is the best proof of their truth, I need not be ashamed of saying them again. It is in no small measure because I wish that others should go forth from our English homes on the same mission, and with the same aspirations, that I have written these memoirs, and if I have induced even a few, contemplating these heroic examples, to endeavour to do likewise, I shall not have written in vain.

J. W. KAYE.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

	PAGE
LORD CORNWALLIS	1
SIR JOHN MALCOLM	129
THE HONORABLE MOUNTSTUART ELPHINSTONE	233
THE REV. HENRY MARTYN	321
SIR CHARLES METCALFE	375
APPENDIX	465

NOT ONCE OR TWICE IN OUR FAIR ISLAND-STORY
THE PATH OF DUTY WAS THE WAY TO GLORY
HE THAT EVER FOLLOWING HER COMMANDS,
ON WITH TOIL OF HEART AND KNEES AND HANDS,
THROUGH THE LONG GORGE TO THE FAR LIGHT HAS WON
HIS PATH UPWARD AND PREVAILED,
SHALL FIND THE TOPPLING CRAGS OF DUTY SCALED,
ARE CLOSE UPON THE SHINING TABLE-LANDS
TO WHICH OUR GOD HIMSELF IS MOON AND SUN.

Tennyson

LIVES
or
INDIAN OFFICERS.

LORD CORNWALLIS.

[BORN 1738.—DIED 1805.]

NOT of men of large estate, born to greatness, whom family 1738—1805. influence and political power elevated to high official position, without the toilsome and the patient ascent, has it been my purpose to write in these Memoirs, but of men who, by the unaided force of their own personal characters, made their way to the front, along the open road of a graduated public service. But there can be no fitter prologue to these illustrations of native worth and noble self-reliance than that which may be found in the life of the man who made the public service of India what it has been and is in this nineteenth century. By Lord Cornwallis, who was three times selected by the King's Government to fill the chief seat of the Indian Government, and who twice discharged its duties, the civil and military servants of the Company were raised from a band of adventurers, enriching themselves by obscure processes and doubtful gains, to a class of virtuous and zealous public functionaries, toiling ever for their country's good. There were, doubtless, brave and strong men before the coming of this Agamemnon; but official purity was almost unknown in those days, and rapidly to acquire wealth by dishonourable means was so uniformly the rule of the adventurer, that no one accounted it dishonour in others, or felt it to be dishonour in himself. Of the corruption, which then traversed the land, Lord Cornwallis sounded the death-knell. And from that time the great Com-

1738—1805. pany of Merchants, which governed India, was served by a succession of soldiers and civilians unsurpassed in rectitude of life by any whose names are recorded in the great muster-roll of the world. Therefore, I say, there can be no fitter introduction to such a work as this than a brief account of the soldier-statesman who, by purifying the public service of India, has enabled the historian to write of men as good as they were great, and to illustrate their careers in detail without any dishonest reserve or any painful admissions.

Family of Cornwallis.

The family of Cornwallis is said to have been, as far as it can be traced backwards, originally of Irish stock ; but its grandeur seems to have been derived, in the first instance, from the city of London. One Thomas Cornwallis settled himself in the great English capital, took successfully to trade, and in 1378 became one of the sheriffs of the City. Having amassed considerable wealth, he bought some broad lands in Suffolk, to which his son John, who represented the county in Parliament, added by the purchase of the estate of Brome. From that time the family rose steadily in importance, being always steadfast in their loyalty to the Throne. In 1599, William Cornwallis was knighted at Dublin for his services against the Irish rebels, and in 1627, Frederick Cornwallis, his son, was created a baronet by Charles the First. After the death of Sir William Cornwallis, his widow married Sir Nathaniel Bacon, a half-brother of the philosopher, but only enjoyed a single year of this second stage of wedded life. The marriage, however, had one important result. Sir Nathaniel Bacon, who died in 1615, left the estate of Culford, near Bury, in Suffolk, to his widow, from whom it in due course descended to Sir Frederick Cornwallis, and became the principal seat of the family. Having thus become an important member of the landed aristocracy of the county, and being distinguished for his loyalty to the Stuarts, Sir Frederick Cornwallis, on the 20th of April, 1661, was created Baron Cornwallis of Eyc. On the 30th of June, 1753, the fifth baron was raised to an earldom by the title of Earl Cornwallis and Viscount Brome.

He had married in 1722 a daughter of Lord Townshend ;

and five daughters in succession had been born to him, when just as the old year, 1738, was dying out, the Cornwallis family, then resident in Grosvenor-square, were gladdened by the birth of an heir to the title. On the 15th of January following the boy was baptised at St. George's, Hanover-square, and received the name of Charles. Of his childhood it would appear that there is no record: but whilst yet a little fellow Charles Cornwallis was sent to Eton, and made such good progress, that, when only half through his sixteenth year, he was near the top of the sixth form.^{*} At school an accident befel him which might have had very serious consequences. It would seem that in those days the laws of "hockey," as played at Eton, were not instituted in accordance with those principles of safety which were observed at a later period. A schoolfellow, by a sad mischance, struck him on the eye with his hockey-stick, so violently as for a time to endanger his sight, and to produce "a slight but permanent obliquity of vision."[†] It was, not improbably, in consequence of this and similar accidents, that a rule was passed compelling the player to use his stick with both hands and never to lift the crook above the knee of the striker.

On leaving Eton, Lord Brome—for by this time his father had been promoted to an earldom—made free choice of the Army for his profession. At the age of eighteen a commission was obtained for him in the First Regiment of Guards; and he began at once to think seriously of doing his duty, with all his might, in the state of life to which he had been called; and, being a soldier, to make himself a good one. The Duke of Cumberland then commanded the Army, and from him permission was sought for the young Guardsman to travel on the Continent, and at some foreign Military Academy to qualify himself for the active duties of his profession. The desired leave was granted in a letter from his Royal Highness to Lord

* I stated in this Memoir as originally published, that he went to Eton as Lord Brome. The same statement is made by Mr. Ross in his most valuable and well-edited collection of Cornwallis papers. But as the title of Viscount Brome was not created until the young heir was far advanced in his fifteenth

year, it is obvious that he went to Eton not as Lord Brome, but as Mr. Cornwallis.

† Ross, p. 3.—The boy was Shute Barrington, afterwards Bishop, successively, of Llandaff, Salisbury, and Durham.

1757—58. Cornwallis, without any stops in it, in which he paid Lord Brome a somewhat equivocal compliment by saying that he had “less of our home education than most young men.” So, accompanied by a Prussian officer named Roguin, as his travelling tutor, the young nobleman left England, and after exploring some of the great continental cities, established himself at the famous Military Academy at Turin, where he entered upon a course of study profitable alike to body and to mind. He began his day’s work at seven o’clock with dancing exercise in the public salon ; at eight he took a course of German ; from nine to eleven he spent in the riding-school ; at eleven he was handed over to the Maître d’Armes ; from twelve to three was devoted to dinner and recreation ; at three he received private instruction in mathematics and fortification ; and at five he had private dancing lessons. “En suite,” said M. de Roguin, in an amusing letter to the Earl, written in very bad French, “quelques visites, l’Opéra et le souper.” He made good progress in his exercises, especially in those of the more active kind, and evinced an excellent disposition, a power of self-control and resistance of evil, very unusual, at that time, in young aristocrats at the dawn of manhood.

The Seven
Years’ War.

But there was better training than that to be derived from scholastic life in any military academy, and Lord Brome was eager to gain experience in the great school of active warfare. Events were taking shape which threatened, or, in the estimation of the young soldier promised, to turn the continent of Europe into a great camp. “I see swarms of Austrians, French, Imperialists, Swedes, and Russians,” wrote Lord Chesterfield in August, 1758, “in all near four hundred thousand men, surrounding the King of Prussia and Prince Ferdinand, who have about a third of that number. Hitherto they have only buzzed, but now I fear they will sting.” England was about to cast in her lot with the weaker side, and to espouse what to many on-lookers seemed a hopeless cause. “Were it any other man than the King of Prussia,” said the same brilliant letter-writer a few weeks afterwards, “I should not hesitate to pronounce him ruined, but he is such a prodigy of a man that I will only say I fear he *may* be ruined.” Lord Brome was at Geneva when tidings reached him that an English army was about to be employed in Germany, and that

the Guards were to take the field. This roused all his military enthusiasm, and he hurried through Switzerland, cursing the country for its want of posts, and arrived at Cologne only to find himself too late. "Only imagine," he wrote to his friend and relative, Tom Townshend, "having set out without leave, come two hundred leagues, and my regiment gone without me!" What was to be done? He might offer himself as a volunteer to Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, but it was reported that the King had forbidden, and that the Duke had set his face against, volunteering. He "resolved, however, to try, and was received in the kindest manner." Six weeks afterwards the English, under Lord Granby, joined the camp at Dulmen, in Westphalia; and the General then appointed Lord Brome an aide-de-camp on his personal staff.

Nothing could have pleased the young soldier better than this, for there was an opportunity of seeing service under the happiest auspices. After little less than a year's campaigning, it was his fortune to be present at a great action, in which the English took a conspicuous part. On the 1st of August, 1759, the battle of Minden was fought—not wholly to our national glory—and Lord Brome rode beside the Commander of the British forces. Soon after this affair, he was promoted to a company in a newly-formed regiment, the Eighty-fifth, and was compelled to join it in England. There he remained until 1761, when, in his twenty-third year, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and placed in command of the 12th Foot, which was then with the army in Germany. Hastening to join the camp of Lord Granby, he found his old friend preparing for active operations against the enemy. The French General, Broglie, had been joined by the Prince de Soubise, and they were meditating an attack on the English and Hanoverian lines near Hohenower. On the evening of the 15th of Ju.ⁿ, Broglie flung himself with desperate resolution on Lord Granby's outposts, feeling well assured that he would carry everything before him. The English General, not forgetful of his old aide-de-camp, gave Lord Brome an opportunity of distinguishing himself, by sending him to the support of the picquets; and he did his work so well that the enemy were repulsed with heavy loss, and next day, when the action became general, were fairly beaten. Throughout the

1761—65. remainder of this year and the earlier part of 1762, Lord Brome saw much service with his regiment in Germany, and was repeatedly engaged in minor affairs with the enemy. The Twelfth was one of the best regiments in the field, and was always in the front when there was work to be done. .

But the famous Seven Years' War was now drawing to a close. France was exhausted; England was weary; and Prussia had gained, or rather retained all that she desired. The time had come for serious negotiation tending to a favourable issue. In the personal history, too, of Lord Brome an important conjuncture had arisen. On the 23rd of July, 1762, his father died, and he became Earl Cornwallis. In the course of the following November he took his seat in the House of Lords. But his heart was with his old regiment, and he still clung to his military duties. He loved country quarters better than the atmosphere of Parliament and the Court, and he went with the Twelfth from one country town to another, with no wish to take part in the strife of political factions, or in the intrigues surrounding the throne of the young King. He was at no time of his life a very vehement partisan. Loyal to the core, he supported the Sovereign and his Ministers when he could do so with a safe conscience. If he followed any man, it was Lord Shelburne, with whom he had lived on terms of intimacy, when they were brothers-in-arms on the great battle-fields of Germany, and who had laid down the sword for the portfolio, and entered upon that career of statesmanship which led him in time to the Premiership of England.

In 1765, the Rockingham Ministry was formed, and the new Prime Minister being anxious to conciliate Lord Shelburne by serving his friends, appointed Lord Cornwallis a Lord of the Bedchamber. A few weeks afterwards he was made an Aide-de-camp to the King. In the following year he was appointed Colonel of the Thirty-third Regiment, and one of the Chief Justices in Eyre, a conjunction of offices which may appear to the uninitiated reader strange and inconsistent, but the functions of the Chief Justiceship, which was a relic of old feudal times, mainly relating to the matter of forest rights, had long since fallen into desuetude, and the office had become a sinecure.

In the month of July, 1768, being then in his thirtieth year, Lord Cornwallis married a daughter of Colonel Jones, of the Second Regiment of Guards. With this lady, who was eight or nine years his junior, he lived for some time in a state of almost unclouded happiness. In March, 1769, a daughter was born to them. He does not appear to have taken, at this time, much part in public affairs. The American question was then beginning to assume gigantic proportions, and no man could help having, or avoid expressing opinions on such a subject. The sympathies of Lord Cornwallis were with the Americans and Lord Chatham. In March, 1766, a few months before that great statesman was raised to the Peerage, the young Earl had voted in a minority of five against the asserted right of taxing the American colonies. It is probable, however, that he was not sorry to absent himself as much as he reasonably and properly could from the House of Lords, that he might not vote against the King. What was the precise character of his relations with Government it is impossible to say. But in the early part of 1770, when the Duke of Grafton was Prime Minister, he was appointed to the lucrative office of Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, the duties of which were performed by deputy, and before the end of the year he was made Constable of the Tower. There was something strange and inexplicable in his position, which did not escape remark; and the great anonymous writer, whose malignant vigilance nothing in high places could escape, fell upon him with remorseless vigour.*

* What Junius, under the acknowledged signature of "Domitian," said of him was this: "My sincere compassion for Lord Cornwallis arises not so much from his quality as from his time of life. A young man by his spirited conduct may atone for the deficiencies of his understanding. Where was the memory of the noble Lord, and what kind of intellect must he possess, when he resigns his place, yet continues in the support of the administration, makes a parade of attending Lord North's levee, and pays a public homage to the deputy of Lord Bute? Where is now his attachment, where are now his professions to Lord Chatham, his zeal for the Whig interest of England, and his detestation

of Lord Bute, the Bedfords, and the Tories? Since the time at which these were the only topics of his conversation, I presume he has shifted his company as well as his opinions. Will he tell the world to which of his uncles, or to what friend—to Phillipson or a Tory Lord—he owes the advice which has directed his conduct? I will not press him further. The young man has taken a wise resolution at last, for he is returning into a voluntary banishment in hopes of recovering the ruin of his reputation." This letter was dated March 5, 1770, at which time Lord Cornwallis was Irish Vice-Treasurer. The place, therefore, which he is said to have resigned must have been the Chief Justiceship in Exchequer.

1768—70

The American question.

1770—76.

From the close of the year 1770 to the dawn of 1776, during which England drifted into the American war, there is but little trace of the public career of Lord Cornwallis. He continued to hold the office of Constable of the Tower, but in May, 1771, the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland passed from him. He was very happy in his domestic life, and his happiness was increased, in the course of the year 1774, by the birth of a son. If he had followed only his own tastes and inclinations at that time, he would have retired altogether from public life; for he was very little incited by ambition, and there was not a taint of avarice in his nature. But England was now on the eve of a great crisis, and the King had need of the best energies of all his servants. It was not a good cause for which Cornwallis was now again called upon to unsheathe the sword; he had publicly, indeed, proclaimed his antipathy to the measures out of which had arisen the bitter strife which could now be allayed only by the last arbitrement of arms. In such a conjuncture there will, perhaps, always be some conflict of opinion among honourable men with respect to the right course of individual action. Lord Chatham, by temporarily withdrawing his own son from the King's army, demonstratively asserted the doctrine that no man ought to use his sword in an unrighteous cause. But Lord Cornwallis believed that it was his first duty, as a soldier, to obey the orders of his King; and to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, at any sacrifice both of private judgment and of private convenience. It was a sore trial to him, for his wife importuned him not to go, and even, it is said, by the help of a powerful relative, prevailed upon the King to release him from his obligations. But he would not avail himself of this permission to remain in England. He took up the commission of Lieutenant-General, which had been bestowed upon him, and at the beginning of 1776 took command of his division, which was under orders to embark at Cork.

which he had ceased to hold in the preceding year. The reference can scarcely be to the appointment in the Household, which he had resigned some four years before. Mr. Ross says that it is "impossible to explain" the letter of "Dormitian," as Lord Cornwallis was present in the House of Lords as frequently as in former years, and all his votes on

American questions were "adverse to the well-known wishes of the King." It is suggested that "absence from London on account of regimental duties," might have, to some extent, interfered with regular attendance in Parliament, but this could not have extended beyond March, 1766, when Lord Cornwallis became a full Colonel.

The arrangements for embarkation were defective. There were unfortunate delays on shore; and then there was a long and disastrous voyage, at a time when it was beyond calculation important that the reinforcements should arrive in time to co-operate with Clinton for the defence of the loyalists in Carolina. Everything went wrong, and continued to go wrong. It was altogether a hopeless case even when first Lord Cornwallis arrived in America. A few weeks afterwards the Declaration of Independence was signed; and no efforts of the King's Government could then crush out the liberties of the nation. Our soldiers did their work, but as men oppressed and weighed down by the badness of the cause. Neither skill nor gallantry availed; nothing prospered with us; and there was not a general officer in the service who did not long to be relieved of his command, if he could honourably withdraw from the contest.

At that time Sir William Howe commanded the King's troops in America. The successes which he obtained were more like defeats, for he never followed them up; and opportunities were lost never to be recovered. It seemed as though the English General had been sent out for the express purpose of letting the enemy escape. He never would cut them up himself, nor would he suffer the officers who served under him to be more prompt in their movements and more vigorous in their acts. Once Cornwallis had it within his power to inflict a blow upon Washington's army, from which it could never have recovered. The rebel troops, encumbered with a heavy train of artillery, were in panic flight before him, and he had been strongly reinforced; but just as the enemy seemed to be within his grasp, he received orders to halt at Brunswick, and before he had permission to advance again, the fugitives were beyond his reach. This was in the earlier part of December, 1776; but, before the end of the month, Washington had sufficiently recovered to cross the Delaware, to surprise

* Sir William Howe, in his official account of this matter, says. "In Jersey, upon the approach of the van of Lord Cornwallis's corps to Brunswick by a forced march on the 1st instant, the enemy went off most precipitately to Prince-town, and, had they not prevented the passage of the Raritan, by breaking a part of the Brunswick bridge,

so great was the confusion among them, that then army must inevitably have been cut to pieces. My first design extending no further than to get and keep possession of East Jersey, Lord Cornwallis had orders not to advance beyond Brunswick, which occasioned him to discontinue his pursuit," &c &c — *Cornwallis Correspondence* Ross.

The American war.

1776.

1777.

the English posts at Delaware, to capture our guns, to make prisoners of nearly all our men, and to occupy the place with rebel troops. The English and the Hessians had been keeping up Christmas somewhat freely, and the American General found them in a helpless state of drunkenness or sleep. Cornwallis had by this time put his troops into winter-quartiers, and, believing that the operations of the season were at an end, was meditating a visit to England, when news of the enemy's success reached him at New York, and he at once abandoned his design. Starting on New Year's-day from New York, he reached Prince-town on the same evening, took command of the British troops in Jersey, and advanced to give battle to the enemy. Before nightfall on the 2nd he had reached Trenton. The Americans evacuated the place, and bivouacked on the opposite bank of a creek which ran through the town. The night was spent by the two Generals in reflections of a very opposite character. Cornwallis was thinking how best to bring on a general action next morning, whilst Washington, clearly seeing that the odds were greatly against him, and victory hopeless, determined to escape under cover of the night. He could not recross the Delaware, for a thaw had set in, so doubled back towards Prince-town, hoping to get into the rear of Cornwallis's army ; but in the thick fog of the January morning he had the mischance to fall in with a body of British troops, who gave him battle, and, in spite of their inferiority of numbers, threw the American battalions into confusion, and inflicted a severe chastisement upon them. There were but two English regiments, and neither was numerically strong ; so the advantage gained at the outset was not followed up, and before Cornwallis could proceed to their support, the enemy had made good their retreat, had crossed the Millstone river, and destroyed the bridge in their rear. It is not necessary to pursue the narrative. The winter was rendered disastrous to the King's party by the activity of Washington and the paralysis which had fallen upon Howe. Cornwallis received the especial thanks of his Sovereign ; but he felt that there could not be a worse field of distinction than that which lay before him in the American provinces.*

* I read with much pleasure your commendation of Lord Cornwallis's services during the campaign, and I am to acquaint you that the King very much

applauds the ability and conduct which his Lordship displayed, &c &c —Lord George Germain to Sir W Howe March 3, 1777 —*Cornwallis Correspondence*

But the time had passed for him to proceed to England¹⁷⁷⁷⁻⁷⁸ during that winter; so the year 1777, almost to its close, saw Lord Cornwallis in the command of his division. Of the little that was done well during that year, he did the greater part. Sir William Howe was an easy, good-natured, popular man; but his qualities were rather of a social than a military character, and excessive sloth was the characteristic of the British army under his command. It was his habit to move too late and to halt too early for any useful purpose. The military annualists are continually reciting the successes which were within the reach of the British troops, but which were always abandoned just at the point of attainment. It is admitted, however, that Lord Cornwallis was more prompt and rapid in his movements than the other British Generals, and it appears that when there was real work to be done he was ever the man to be sent to the front. He did the work well, too—as far as he was permitted to do it. One instance will suffice to show the quality of the General. In the burning month of June, it seemed to the English Commander that circumstances were favourable for an attack on Washington's force; and Cornwallis was sent forward, in command of the van of the British army, to give him battle. He had not marched far before he fell in with the leading columns of the American army. No orders were now needed from higher authority, so Cornwallis flung himself upon the enemy with so much impetuosity that they staggered at the first onset, and were soon in a state of inextricable confusion. Leaving behind them their guns and their killed and wounded, they fled in disorder from the field.

But the winter came round again, and Cornwallis, disappointed in the preceding year, was now eager to return to England. Sir William Howe sent him home with a commission to communicate with the King's Government regarding the general history and conduct of the war. On the 18th of January, 1788, he disembarked from the *Brilliant*, and hastened to embrace his wife and children. The joy of meeting even then was clouded by the thought of the coming separation. Brief was the time of absence allowed to him, and there was much in that little time to be done. The months of February and March and the earlier weeks of April passed rapidly away in the transaction of business with

1778. the King's Ministers, in attendance at the House of Lords, and in sweet communion with his family. The prospect before him was not cheering. His sentiments were unchanged. He had heard with reverential sorrow the dying voice of Chatham lifted up in a last despairing effort to save his unhappy country from an ignominious peace; but he did not the less deprecate the causes of the war, or disapprove of the manner in which it was conducted. He had seen everything going wrong, when there was only an undisciplined militia to be coerced by the best troops of the King, and now France was lending her aid to the cause of American Independence. It was true that General Howe, who had done so much to favour the triumph of the rebels, was about to resign the command of the King's forces in America. But the General's place was to be filled by one whom he did not like so well as a man, and whom he did not trust much more as a commander. So he went to the place of embarkation, at the end of the third week of April, in a state of sore depression of spirit, with nothing but the one abiding sense of his duty as a soldier to sustain him.

Death of Lady Cornwallis. His wife and children accompanied him to Portsmouth. The parting was very painful, and Lady Cornwallis went back to Culford utterly weighed down by the burden of her grief. She had lived in strict retirement during the first absence of her lord, and now she relapsed into her old solitary ways, grieving and pining as one without hope, until her health gave way beneath the unceasing weight of her sorrow, and she said that she was dying of a broken heart. In this piteous state, a strange fancy seized her. She desired that a thorn-tree might be planted over her grave in the family vault at Culford, just above the spot where her poor broken heart would be laid, thus emblematising the fate of one whom the "pricking briars and grieving thorns" had torn and pierced in the tenderest parts of her humanity. This was to be her epitaph. Not a word was to be graven on her tomb.

In the mean while Lord Cornwallis had rejoined the King's army in America. He found that Sir Henry Clinton was on the point of evacuating Philadelphia, and that there was small chance of his ever being able to co-operate harmoniously with his chief. He was now second in command, and he held a

1779.

dormant commission to succeed, in the event of Clinton's death or retirement, to the chief command of all the forces. It is not very clear what was the main cause of that disagreement, which in time ripened into a bitter feud between the two Generals; but Cornwallis had been only a very few weeks in America when his position was so unbearable that he wrote to the Secretary of State, begging him to lay a humble request before his Majesty that he might be permitted to return to England. The request was not granted. His services could not be dispensed with at such a time; so he went on his work. But the official answer of the King's Government had scarcely been received, when tidings reached Cornwallis that his wife was dying. The year was then far spent, and the army was going into winter-quarters; so he determined to resign his command, and to set his face again towards England. The necessary permission was obtained from Clinton; and, in a state of extreme anxiety and depression, Cornwallis put himself on board ship. In the middle of the month of December he reached Culford. His wife was still alive; but all hope of her recovery had gone. It was now too late even for his presence to save. She survived her husband's return for two months, and then passed away to her rest.†

Then a great change descended upon the character, and influenced all the after-career of Lord Cornwallis. It is not to be doubted that the bent of his natural affections was towards a quiet domestic life, and it is probable that, if this great calamity had not fallen upon him, he would have endeavoured to detach himself from the public service. But all now was changed. That which had been a burden became a relief to him. He turned to the excitements of active life to fill the

* Clinton put the best gloss upon the matter that he could. "The Army being now in winter-quarters," he wrote to the Secretary of State, "and the defences of the different posts assigned, I have consented that Lieutenant-General Earl Cornwallis should return to England, where his knowledge of the country and our circumstances may during this season be as serviceable as I have found his experience and activity during the campaign."

† Lady Cornwallis died on the 16th of February, 1779. The morbid fancy

which she had expressed to be buried with a thorn-tree planted over her heart was complied with, and no name was engraved on the slab which marked the place in the vault at Culford where her remains were interred. Mr Ross adds, that "the thorn-tree was necessarily removed in March, 1855, in consequence of alterations in the church; it was carefully replanted in the churchyard, but did not live more than three years afterwards." — *Cornwallis Correspondence*. Ross.

1779—80 void that was left in his heart and to appease its cravings. After a brief interval of mournful retirement, he looked the world again in the face, and tendered his services to the King for re-employment in America.

The offer was eagerly accepted, and again Lord Cornwallis was appointed second in command and provisional Commander-in-Chief in America. He was now forty years of age, in the very vigour of his manhood ; and if he was not stirred by any strong impulses of ambition, there was not one of the King's servants who was sustained by a higher and more enduring sense of duty. Duty, indeed, was now everything to Cornwallis. The wreck of his domestic happiness had endeared his work to him, and that which had before been submission to a hard necessity, now became, in the changed circumstances of his life, a welcome relief from the pressure of a great sorrow. Perhaps even certain painful peculiarities in his situation were not without their uses in distracting his mind, and breaking in upon the monotony of his distress.

Rupture with Clinton.

How it happened I cannot very distinctly explain, but the King's Ministers had assuredly placed him in a position which rendered a conflict with Sir Henry Clinton sooner or later inevitable. As second in command, with a provisional commission to succeed to the chiefship of the army, it was not easy altogether to keep clear of jealousies and rivalries ; but as the King's Government had authorised him to correspond directly with them, as though he held altogether an independent command, there was a vagueness about the limits of authority, which was sure to create perplexity and to excite antagonism between the two Generals. It is probable that Clinton foresaw this, for he asked permission to resign. If there were, however, any bitterness of feeling in his mind, he veiled it with becoming courtesy. “I must beg leave,” he wrote to Lord George Germain, “to express how happy I am made by the return of Lord Cornwallis to this country. His Lordship's indefatigable zeal, his knowledge of the country, his professional ability, and the high estimation in which he is held by this army must naturally give me the warmest confidence of efficacious support from him in every undertaking which opportunity may prompt, and our circumstances allow. But his presence affords to me another source of satisfaction. When

1780.

there is upon the spot an officer every way so well qualified to have the interests of the country entrusted to him, I should hope I might without difficulty be removed from a station which nobody acquainted with its conditions will suppose to have sat lightly upon me." His resignation was not accepted ; and the two Generals were left, to be drifted, by the first tide of hostile circumstances, into deadly collision.

But at no time did Lord Cornwallis dispute the superior authority of Sir Henry Clinton, or fail publicly to recognise that officer as his chief. He had not long returned to America, when, having heard that Clinton proposed to carry Charleston by assault, he offered his services to him, and sought permission to accompany the stormers. "If you find," he wrote, "that the enemy are obstinately bent on standing a siege, I shall take it as a favour if you will let me be of the party. I can be with you in eight hours from your sending to me. I should be happy to attend my old friends, the Grenadiers and Light Infantry, and perhaps you may think that on an occasion of that sort you cannot have too many officers. I can only say that, unless you see any inconvenience to the service, it is my hearty wish to attend you on that occasion. As it may not be proper to commit to writing, if you should approve of it, your saying 'Your Lordship will *take a ride* at such an hour' will be sufficient." It may be doubted whether it was the duty of Lord Cornwallis, holding such a commission as he held, to volunteer for a storming party ; but it is very difficult to blame a soldier who thus for a time forgets his rank, and sinks the officer in the soldier.

But Charleston was not carried by assault ; and there was ^{The battle of} General's, not Subaltern's, work to be done by Cornwallis. On ^{Camden.} the 12th of May, the American General, Lincoln, surrendered ; and early in the following month Clinton moved to the northward, whilst Cornwallis took the command in South Carolina, with his head-quarters at Charleston. Whilst he was debating in his mind the course of future operations, news came that a strong body of the enemy, under General Gates, were advancing to attack the British troops posted at Camden ; so he hastened to join the army, and placed himself at its head. It was plain that the Americans were in far greater force, but he at once resolved to give them battle. On the morning of the

1780. 16th of August, Cornwallis and Gates found themselves within reach of each other. The English General commenced the attack, and, after a sharp conflict, totally defeated the enemy, and took their guns, ammunition, and baggage. "In short," wrote the English General, "there never was a more complete victory." But victories, in those days, however complete, did not lead to much. After the battle of Camden, Cornwallis determined to execute the design, which he had previously formed, of advancing into North Carolina. But he had not proceeded farther than Charlotte-town, when he found that the situation of affairs was such as to preclude all hope of the success of offensive operations. There was a scarcity of carriage; there was a scarcity of stores; and, worse than all, there was such a scarcity of active loyalty in North Carolina, that even the most sanguine of generals could have seen but little brightness in the prospect before him. The militia of so-called "loyalists," raised in America, were not to be trusted. They were as likely as not to forsake the standard of King George in a critical moment, and go over bodily to his enemies. The people who would have remained true to the parent State were disheartened by the want of vigour with which the war had been prosecuted by the King's Government, and found that there was no safety for them except in adhesion to the "rebel" cause. Whilst things were in this state, a serious disaster occurred to a detachment of loyalists under Major Ferguson, which dispelled all doubt upon the subject of the comparative strength of the two parties in North Carolina; so, as it was now the month of October, Cornwallis determined to take up a defensive position, and to place his army in winter-quarters. He had himself fallen sick; a severe fever had seized him; and he was incapacitated for a while for service in the field.

During the winter months, Lord Cornwallis remained inactive, with his forces, at Wynnesborough; but the advance into North Carolina had been deferred, not abandoned, and his mind was busy with the thought of the coming campaign. The new year found him with restored health and renewed eagerness for action. It was scarcely, indeed, a week old, when he wrote to Sir Henry Clinton that he was ready to begin his march. But the new campaign rose, as the old had set, in a

1781.

cloud of disaster. A force of all arms, sent forward under Colonel Tarleton “to strike a blow at General Morgan,” received itself such a blow from the American, that it reeled and staggered, and was so sore-stricken that it never recovered again. At the first onset the enemy’s line gave way, and retired; but when the King’s troops went in pursuit, the “rebels” faced about, and delivered such a sharp fire that both our Infantry and our Cavalry were thrown into confusion, and were soon in a state of panic flight. The Artillery, after the fashion of that branch of the service, stood to their guns, and surrendered them only with their lives.

This disaster at Cowpens was as serious as it was unexpected; and, although it incited Cornwallis to redouble his exertions, he never wholly recovered from its effects. When the news reached him, he pushed forward with all possible despatch, hoping to overtake Morgan; but the American General had a clear start, and was not to be caught. So Cornwallis planted the King’s standard at Hillsborough; but, forage and provisions being scarce in the neighbourhood, he crossed the Haw River about the end of February, and posted himself at Allemanse Creek. There, at the beginning of March, he gained tidings of the movements of the enemy under General Greene, and was eager to give them battle. On the 14th, the welcome news came that the enemy had advanced to Guildford, some twelve miles from the British camp. The following morning saw the army under Cornwallis pushing forward to meet the American forces, or to attack them in their encampments. They were soon in sight of each other. An hour after noon the action commenced. The country, bounded by extensive woods, was unfavourable to open fighting, and afforded little scope for any complicated generalship. But the simple dispositions of Cornwallis were admirable, and the English troops, among which, conspicuous for their gallantry, were the Guards, covered themselves with glory. They were greatly outmatched in numbers.* The American General had chosen his ground, had disengaged himself of his baggage, and had ample time

* In a letter to General Phillips, given in Mr. Ross’s work, Lord Cornwallis says that the enemy were “seven times his number.” But his “present state,”

on the morning of March 15, shows that he had nearly two thousand men, and the enemy had about seven thousand

1781

to concert his plans before the English had come within reach of his guns. In short, everything was against the English Commander. But his own coolness and confidence in the face of these heavy odds, and the unflinching courage of his men, made inferiority of numbers and disadvantages of position matters only of small account. Throughout the long series of military operations which preceded the disruption of the American colonies from the parent State, no battle was better fought by the English, no victory was more triumphantly accomplished, than that which crowned this action at Guildford. The Americans, disastrously beaten at all points, fled from the field of battle, and when, at a distance of eighteen miles from the scene, Greene was able to rally his disordered troops, he found that he had few except his Regulars with him. The American historians admit that this was a signal illustration of the steadfastness and courage of the English troops when effectively commanded; whilst the English annalists of the war relate that nothing grander was seen at Crecy, Poictiers, or Agincourt.* In this action Cornwallis was wounded; but he would not suffer his name to appear in the list of casualties.

But it was one of the sad and sickening circumstances of this unhappy war, that when the King's troops gained a victory—and they were victorious in well-nigh every pitched battle—they could never turn it to account. In effect, it was commonly more like a defeat. Regarding it solely in its military aspects, no success could have been more complete than that which crowned the day's hard fighting at Guildford; but it hurt the British more than the Americans. So shattered and sore-spent was Cornwallis's little army after that unequal contest, that to follow up the victory was impossible; nay, to fall back and refit was necessary. There was no forage in the

* Stedman, after describing in glowing terms the victory of Guildford, says "History, perhaps, does not furnish an instance of a battle gained under all the disadvantages which the British troops, assisted by a regiment of Hessians and some Yagers, had to contend against at Guildford Court House. Nor is there, perhaps, in the records of history, an instance of a battle fought with more determined perseverance than was shown

by the British troops on that memorable day. The battles of Crecy, of Poictiers, and of Agincourt—the glory of our own country and the admiration of ages—had in each of them, either from particular local situation or other fortunate and favourable circumstances, something in a degree to counterbalance the superiority of numbers, here, time, place, and numbers, all united against the British."

1781.

neighbourhood ; there was no shelter. The troops were without provisions, and the people in the vicinity were afraid to supply them. Having done the best he could, therefore, for his wounded, which was but little, he determined to fall back to a more desirable resting-place. Three days after the battle he marched out from Guildford. But he could find no convenient halting-place nearer than Wilmington ; so there he planted his army on the 7th of April, and in no very sanguine mood began to meditate the future of the war.

The prospects before him were anything but cheering. If ^{Prospects of} it were true in this instance that those who were not with ^{the war} him were against him, nearly the whole population of the American colonies was now arrayed against King George. There was but little loyalty left in the country, and that little was afraid to betray itself. The colonists who would have supported the King's cause by passive submission, if not by active assistance, were weary of waiting for the deliverance they expected ; and as his enemies were waxing stronger and stronger every day, and with increased strength gathering increased bitterness, it had become absolute ruin to be on the King's side. But, hopeless as was the issue, the King's Generals were constrained to continue the war as best they could ; and to Cornwallis it seemed best to carry it into Virginia. "H," he wrote to Lord George Germaine, "it should appear to be the interest of Great Britain to maintain what she already possesses, and to push the war in the Southern Provinces, I take the liberty of giving it as my opinion that a serious attempt on Virginia would be the most solid plan, because successful operations might not only be attended with important consequences there, but would tend to the security of South Carolina, and ultimately to the submission of North Carolina." And there were immediate considerations which rendered it expedient that he should put his plans into execution without any loss of time. "My situation here is very distressing," he wrote from Wilmington to his friend General Phillips, on the 24th of April. "Greene took the advantage of my being obliged to come to this place, and has marched to South Carolina. My expresses to Lord Rawdon on my leaving Cross Creek, warning him of the possibility of such a movement, have all failed ; mountaineers and militia have poured into the

1781. back part of that province, and I much fear that Lord Rawdon's posts will be so distant from each other, and his troops so scattered, as to put him into the greatest danger of being beat in detail, and that the worst consequences may happen to most of the troops out of Charles-town. By a direct move towards Camden, I cannot get time enough to relieve Lord Rawdon ; and, should he have fallen, my army would be exposed to the utmost danger, from the great rivers I should have to pass, the exhausted state of the country, the numerous militia, the almost universal spirit of revolt which prevails in South Carolina, and the strength of Greene's army, whose continentals alone are at least as numerous as I am ; and I could be of no use on my arrival at Charles-town, there being nothing to apprehend at present for that post. I shall, therefore, immediately march up the country by Duplin Court House, pointing towards Hillsborough, in hopes to withdraw Greene. If that should not succeed, I should be much tempted to try to form a junction with you."* On the following day he marched from Wilmington ; but at that very time Lord Rawdon was in hot conflict with Greene at Hobkirk's Hill. The English troops, according to their wont, were victorious in action ; but they could make nothing of their victory, and the enemy, though beaten, escaped.

Advance into Virginia.

The ground, however, was clear for Cornwallis's advance, and, during the space of three or four weeks, he marched uninterruptedly right through North Carolina into the Virginian provinces. He had spoken of the attempt, in the letter above quoted, to form a junction with Phillips only as a contingency, but he appears in reality to have determined upon it ; and on the 20th of May he was at Petersburg. He arrived with a heavy heart ; for, as he entered Virginia, he learned that his friend, whom he was advancing to relieve, and on whose co-operation he had relied, was lying cold in his grave. It was, indeed, a heavy loss both to himself and to his country, and it cast a cloud over the prospects of the campaign. He had at no time been very hopeful of the issue ; but he saw that the only thing to be done was to carry the war into Virginia, and so he proceeded at once to map out his operations. "I shall now pro-

* This letter is printed at length in the Appendix to Lord Cornwallis's "Re-ply to Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative," published in 1783.

1781.

ceed," he wrote to Clinton on the 26th of May, "to dislodge La Fayette from Richmond, and, with my light troops, to destroy any magazines or stores in the neighbourhood which may have been collected either for his use or General Greene's army. From thence I purpose to move to the neck at Williamsburg, which is represented as healthy, and where some subsistence may be procured, and keep myself unengaged from operations which might interfere with your plan for the campaign until I have the satisfaction of hearing from you. I hope I shall then have an opportunity to receive better information than has been in my power to procure relative to a proper harbour and place of arms. At present, I am inclined to think well of York." He had already, indeed, commenced his march, and was pressing on towards Richmond when he wrote. Once he contrived to draw La Fayette into battle, and gave him so warm a reception, that if night had not fallen on the conflict, he might have taken the Frenchman's whole corps. But from this time the tide of fortune turned, darkly and sadly, against the English Commanders. The eventual success of the King's troops had long become hopeless. All the seeds of a great failure were in the very nature of the business itself, and it needed but one adventitious circumstance to develop them speedily into a great harvest of disaster. Small chance is there that a military expedition should prosper at any time, when the leaders are divided against themselves. There was need, at this time, for the most perfect unity of action. But Cornwallis and Clinton were operating, in different parts of the country, without any common plan of action. The communications between the two forces were extremely defective, and it is doubtful whether the Generals cared to improve them. It was for years afterwards a subject of vehement controversial discussion whether Clinton had or not approved of the expedition into Virginia at all. Irritated, and perhaps not without reason, by the permission given to Cornwallis to correspond directly with the King's Government, the Commander-in-

* The truth is, that not feeling certain that he would succeed, he was unwilling to raise expectations in Phillips's mind which might not be realised by the result, but he wrote at the same time to the King's Government that he

had "resolved to take advantage of General Greene's having left the back part of Virginia open, and march immediately into that province to attempt a junction with General Phillips."

1781. Chief said sneeringly that he did not know but that his Lordship had received his orders from the Secretary of State ; and Cornwallis declared that the style of Clinton's letters to him was so offensive, that he would have thrown up his command in disgust, had the circumstances of the war at that time been of a less critical character. It is not necessary to pursue the story of these dissensions. It is enough that whilst the power of the English was rapidly crumbling away, the Americans were gathering fresh strength for the contest. Large reinforcements were coming in from France ; and the military genius of the colonists was in course of rapid development. It was plain that the Allies were meditating a grand attack upon the English forces ; but so imperfect was our knowledge of their movements and their designs, that it was uncertain whether the great descent would be made on Clinton's position at New York or on Cornwallis's on the York River. So each General was eager to be reinforced by the other, and the energies of the British troops were wasted in embarkations and disembarkations and fruitless preparations for contingencies that never occurred.

All idea of offensive operations in Virginia had now been abandoned. Cornwallis had posted his troops at York and Gloucester, two small towns or villages on opposite banks of the York River, and there he began at once to throw up defensive works. On the 22nd of August he wrote to Clinton, saying that "his experience of the fatigue and difficulty of constructing works in that warm season, convinced him that all the labour that the troops there would be capable of without ruining their health would be required for at least six weeks to put the intended works at this place in a tolerable state of defence." And as time advanced, and the works proceeded, it was manifest that he would have need of all the defensive power that he could create ; for in the early autumn it became certain that Washington was about to concentrate all his energies upon a decisive attack on Cornwallis's position. In truth, he was now in imminent danger—and all that he could do was to work and to wait. "While fleets and armies," writes one of the historians of the war—"Frenchmen from Rhode Island and the West Indies, and Americans from North, South, East, and West—were gathering round him, Lord Cornwallis continued to for-

1781

tify his positions as well as he could, and to indulge in the hope that Sir Henry Clinton would be enabled, by means of the arrival of Admiral Digby, to co-operate with him, and to bring round to the Chesapeake such a force of men and ships as would turn the scale entirely in favour of the British." He was now, indeed, in the toils of the enemy, who were closing around him, and the success so eagerly looked for still seemed to be far off. If in that conjuncture he had wholly desponded, he would, as his own natural inclinations prompted him, have gone out to try conclusions with the enemy, and, in his despair, risked everything upon the gambler's throw; but he still hoped that the promised relief would come, so he continued to stand upon the defensive.

What follows is a well-known passage in English history. The surrender of York Town As the autumn advanced, the French and American armies, strong in numbers, strong in all the equipments of war, with the best skill of European artillermen and engineers, continued to close around Cornwallis's lines; and at the end of September they commenced the attack. York Town was but a poor village, and the King's troops had not been able so to strengthen their defences as to enable them to stand a regular siege. In this emergency the only substantial hope of success lay in the arrival of succours from Clinton's force. The tactics of the enemy, which had before been doubtful, were now fully developed beyond all questioning, and there was no longer any doubt respecting the point on which all the strength of the British should be concentrated. But the reinforcements, which might have saved him, did not come. Day after day, Cornwallis waited eagerly for tidings of the coming help that might turn a disastrous failure into a glorious success. Clinton had written to say that he was sending five thousand men to his relief. But the troop-ships from New York did not make their longed-for appearance in the Chesapeake, and, in the mean while, the heavy ordnance of the enemy was telling with mighty effect upon the British works. The courage and constancy of the besieged were of the highest order, and Cornwallis was not a man to be inactive if anything could be done by fighting. But never since the world began has there been so pitiful a record of wasted bravery as that which lies before us in the annals of our cam-

1781. paigns in America. When our people made a gallant sortie upon the destroying batteries of the enemy, and spiked their guns, complete as was the first success of the brave exploit, it was as profitless as all our other successes. The guns were soon made serviceable again, and our position was more sorely pressed than before. Then Cornwallis saw clearly that there was no longer any hope of a successful issue to his defensive operations. The month of October was fast wearing away, and there was no appearance of the promised succours. There were only two ways of saving the army under his command. One was by surrender, against which his soul revolted, and the other was by cutting his way through the enemy ; and this, hazardous as it was, had far greater attractions for him. So he resolved, under the cover of the night, to embark his troops, to cross the river, and to force his way through the enemy's lines on the opposite bank. It was a resolution worthy of a brave man ; but Providence forbade its successful issue. The attempt was made, but it failed. A violent storm arose, and baffled the enterprise midway towards completion. The boats which had crossed the river with a portion of the force could not be sent back to bring over the remainder, and before the wind had moderated the favouring darkness had passed. All that Cornwallis could then do was to withdraw the regiments that had passed over from their perilous position on the opposite bank of the river, and to seek safety behind the lines of York Town.

But there was no longer any safety to be found there. The works were crumbling to pieces. The ammunition in store was well-nigh exhausted. Sickness had broken out among the troops, and there was barely enough effective strength in garrison to man the lines. The longed-for succours were now past hoping for ; and the last throw of despairing heroism had failed. In this extremity, on the 18th of October Cornwallis called a council of his chief officers and engineers ; but no man could speak words of comfort to him, or fortify him with assurances that there were any means of resisting the assaults of the enemy, which were then hourly expected. "Under all these circumstances, I thought," he wrote afterwards to Sir Henry Clinton, "it would have been wanton and inhuman to the last degree to sacrifice the lives

1781.

of this small body of gallant soldiers, who had ever behaved with so much fidelity and courage, by exposing them to an assault which, from the numbers and precautions of the enemy, could not fail to succeed. I therefore proposed to capitulate."

A letter was, therefore, addressed to Washington, who answered that, ardently desirous to spare the further effusion of blood, he would willingly discuss such terms of surrender as he might consider admissible. The terms agreed upon were that the British garrison should march out of York Town "with shouldered arms, colours cased, and drums beating"—the cavalry with swords drawn and trumpets sounding—and that then they were to ground their arms, and to become prisoners of war. The officers, however, were to be allowed to retain their side-arms.* In effect, this humiliating reverse brought the war in America to a close, though it was feebly maintained for a space of more than another year. Cornwallis had attempted to negotiate terms, permitting the officers and men under him to leave America for England or Germany on parole. To this Washington would not accede, and so the prisoners of war were to remain on the scene of the disaster, under the supervision of the allies. The French in this conjuncture behaved with a generosity that it is pleasant to record. "The treatment in general," wrote Cornwallis, a few days after his surrender, "that we have received from the enemy has been perfectly good and proper; but the kindness and attention that have been shown to us by the French officers in particular—their delicate sensibility of our situation—their generous and pressing offers of money, both public and private, to any amount—has really gone beyond what I can possibly describe, and will, I hope, make an impression on the breast of every British officer, whenever the fortune of war should put any of them into our power." Good words, and worthy to be remembered; a generous recognition of conduct right generous in an enemy, becoming the chivalry of the two foremost nations of the world.

But Cornwallis was not doomed to remain long a captive in America. It happened that one of the commissioners ap-

* There were several other subsidiary articles, but it is necessary only to recite the above

1781—83 pointed by Washington to negotiate the terms of capitulation was Colonel John Laurens, whose father, Henry Laurens, President of Congress, had been captured by the English, and was then a prisoner in our hands. Nay, more—having been committed to the Tower, he was nominally in the custody of Lord Cornwallis, who still retained the office of Constable. So it was thought that an exchange of these two illustrious prisoners might be effected. Cornwallis, therefore, was allowed to leave America on his parole. He arrived in

Return to
England.
1782.

England a few days after the dawn of the new year. But the negotiation of the exchange was a long and weary business, and dragged painfully all through the year. The Americans denied that they had promised to release Cornwallis in exchange for Laurens, and having taken another English General,⁶ who might be exchanged for their countryman, thought it would be well to continue the parole of the first, and at one time threatened to recall him to America. All this disquieted him greatly. There was at the same time, too, another source of trouble. Sir Henry Clinton had returned to England, and had commenced a war of pamphlets, in which Cornwallis felt himself obliged to take part in self-defence. The main question so acrimoniously discussed was whether Clinton had, or had not, sanctioned the operations in Virginia which were brought to so disastrous a close. A large mass of correspondence was produced by both disputants in support of their several assertions, with the result that generally attends paper-warfare of this kind. Neither party was convinced by the other; public opinion was divided; and the question remained at the end of the controversy in the same state as when it was commenced.

But the discussion came to an end without a duel, and at last Cornwallis was released from his parole. He then became eager for re-employment in the line of his profession. He had little taste for party politics, and his position was not a pleasant one, for the most cherished of his personal friends, and those with whose sentiments he most sympathised, were in Opposition;† and as he held an appointment under Go-

⁶ General Burgoyne

Prime Minister from July, 1782, to April, 1783, when his ministry was overthrown.

[†] Lord Shelburne, whom he always regarded as his political leader, was

vernment,* he considered it his duty to take a decided course, and to place his office at the disposal of the Crown. The King had at first declined to accept his resignation; but, in the beginning of 1784, Cornwallis felt that he could no longer hold the office with honour. "You will agree with me," he wrote to his friend Colonel Ross, in January, "that in the present state of parties in this country it was impossible for me to hold it long without becoming contemptible to all sides, and that, perhaps, I had already held it too long; indeed, I am convinced that I ought to have resigned on the coming in of the Coalition."† He had now fully made up his mind, and although, as he said, he should "lose a much greater part of his income than he could afford," he resigned the Constableship, and Lord George Lennox was appointed to succeed him.

1783—84.
Resignation of
the Constable-
ship.

But the King had not many good soldiers in those days; and Cornwallis was not a man to be shelved. If no great success had attended his operations in America, it was generally conceived that he had done better than any one else. He was a brave soldier, and, when opportunity offered, he had proved himself to be a good general. But, above all, he was a man of true nobility of nature, and thoroughly to be trusted. The King's Government, indeed, had unabated confidence in him, though the "fortune of war" had been adverse, and were anxious again to re-employ him on some service of responsibility, and sounded him as to his willingness to go to India. Lord Shelburne had been the first to enter into friendly communication with him on the subject; but whilst he was on his parole, Cornwallis would not suffer himself even to think of employment abroad. It was not, however, the partiality of a friend that dictated this proposal. When Shelburne was driven from office and the Coalition were in power, Lord North‡ and Mr. Fox seemed to be equally anxious to secure

* The office of Constable of the Tower was then a civil office.

† This was the coalition between North and Fox, which drove Lord Shelburne from office, and afterwards, in the face of much regal reluctance, was permitted to form a Cabinet.

‡ "Lord Hinchingbrook," wrote Lord Cornwallis to Mr. Ross, Oct. 26, 1783, "whom I saw when I was at Eton told me that the King said to him that Lord

North had asked whether I would go to India. He answered that he supposed I would, if it was proposed to me to go in a proper situation. As, however, I have heard nothing from Lord North, with whom I have such easy communication, I conclude that nothing is seriously meant. As the time of year for talking on the terrace was over, I could not conveniently see his Majesty." —*Cornwallis Correspondence.* Ross

1783. the services of Cornwallis. Fox, indeed, though in no wise his friend, private or political, paid him the highest possible tribute in the course of his speech on the India Bill.* But there was a change of Ministry, followed by a general election; and the reins of empire were now securely in the hands of Mr. Pitt. The new year found Cornwallis manifestly reluctant to take service in India. "Should any proposals be hereafter made to me relative to India," he had written to Colonel Ross in December, "I do not feel at all inclined to listen to them. I am handsomely off, and in the present fluctuating state of affairs at home, with violent animosities about India, I can see no prospect of any good. I am aware that present ease may have some weight, but it requires great resolution to engage a second time in a plan of certain misery for the rest of my life without more substantial encouragements." The change of Ministry rendered it certain that the offer would be renewed; and as soon as the abatement of popular excitement at home allowed Mr. Pitt and his friends to give a thought to the remote dependency of India, they began to sound him as to his willingness to turn his face towards the East Indies.

Dec. 1783
Ministerial overtures

May 9, 1784.

It appears to have been, at this time, in contemplation to invite Lord Cornwallis to assume the chief command of the army in that country. But the idea was not an attractive one to him. "The more I turn it in my mind," he said, "the less inclination I feel to undertake it. I see no field for extraordinary military reputation, and it appears to me, in every light, dangerous to the greatest degree. To abandon my children and every comfort on this side the grave; to quarrel with the Supreme Government in India, whatever it might be; to find that I have neither power to model the army or correct abuses; and, finally, to run the risk of being beat by some Nabob, and being disgraced to all eternity, which from what I have read of these battles appears to be a very probable thing

* "A learned gentleman (Mr. Dundas) last year proposed to give the most extraordinary powers to the Governor-General, he at the same time named the person who was to fill the office. The person was Earl Cornwallis, whom he (Mr. Fox) named only for the purpose of paying homage to his high character.

The name of such a man might make Parliament consent to the vesting of such powers in a Governor-General, but certain it was that nothing but the great character of that noble Lord could ever induce the Legislature to commit such powers to an individual at the distance of half the globe."

1784.

to happen—I cannot see, in opposition to this, great renown and brilliant fortune.” But when his sentiments were known, the King’s Government, as represented by William Pitt, was willing to place both the civil and the military power in his hands. This changed the complexion of affairs—because it now appeared to him that there were prospects of more extensive usefulness in India. “ My mind is much agitated,” he wrote shortly afterwards to Colonel Ross. “ I can come to no resolution till I know the plan ; yet inclination cries out every moment, ‘ Do not think of it ; reject all offers ; why should you volunteer plague and misery ?’ Duty then whispers, ‘ You are not sent here merely to please yourself ; the wisdom of Providence has thought fit to put an insuperable bar to any great degree of happiness ; can you tell, if you stay at home, that the loss of your son, or some heavy calamity, may not plunge you in the deepest despair ? Try to be of some use ; serve your country and your friends ; your confined circumstances do not allow you to contribute to the happiness of others, by generosity and extensive charity ; take the means which God is willing to place in your hands.’ . . . After all I have said, I can hardly think the India business will come in such a shape as to oblige me to accept. I will, however, give my reason as free scope as possible to act by boldly combating my passions, and hope I shall decide for the best.” And again, a few weeks afterwards, he wrote : “ I am sensible that finding I can live comfortably in England, and having every reason to expect comfort from my children, who are now nearly arriving at an age when an anxious and affectionate father would wish to be constantly watching them, I should, by going to India, sacrifice all earthly happiness without even gratifying my favourite passion, which has hitherto excited me to quit ease and enjoyment for mortification and anxiety ; yet I flatter myself I shall have fortitude enough to do my duty, if I should see a prospect of being really serviceable to my country.”* In this sentence we see the very key-stone of his character—a prevailing sense that he was not sent into the world only to please himself, but commissioned to do an appointed work ; and that it was his duty to do it manfully and with all his might.

* Cornwallis Correspondence. Ross.

1784.

But he was very doubtful at this time whether the conditions of the proffered employment in India would be such as to satisfy him that he could be of substantial use to the State. His American experiences had painfully impressed upon him the fact that there are conditions of service which may frustrate the best efforts of zeal and ability of the highest order; and the reports from India, which from time to time had reached him since his return from the West, did much to confirm this impression of the evil of divided authority and responsibility, and the impossibility of escaping unsoiled from the antagonism of jealous rivals. Pitt was now about to bring in a new India Bill, and much would depend upon the extent of the power to be conferred upon the Governor-General. The bill was a very good bill;* but the framers of it had striven rather to perfect the machinery of the Home Government, and to establish just relations between its several parts, than to institute a system of government in India so contrived as to prevent those desperate collisions which had yielded such a growth of scandals during the protracted administration of Warren Hastings. The bill did not fulfil the conditions under which alone Lord Cornwallis believed that he could be serviceable to the State. Even before it had passed through committee, the King's Government had offered him any appointment under it that he might be inclined to accept. He might go out as Governor-General, or he might go out as Commander-in-Chief; but he could not hold both offices. The "favourite passion," of which he had spoken in the letter quoted above, was a desire for military glory. He was very reluctant to

* Lord Russell, in his Memoirs of Charles Fox, has observed with infinite truth "It was easy for Mr. Fox, with his vast powers of reasoning, long exercised on this subject, to prove that these two authorities must be always in conflict, that, with two supreme heads confronted, confusion must ensue, and that the abuses of the Indian Government must be perpetuated under so strange and anomalous a system. The experience of seventy years, however, has blunted arguments which could not be logically refuted. The real supremacy of the Ministers of the Crown, usually kept in the background, but always ready to be exerted, has kept in check the adminis-

tration of the Company, and placed the affairs of India under that guarantee of ministerial responsibility by which all things in Great Britain are ordered and controlled. The Directors of the East India Company have not ventured to connive at acts which a Minister of the Crown would not sanction, and a Minister of the Crown would not sanction acts which he could not defend in Parliament. Thus silently, but effectually, the spirit of the British Constitution has pervaded India, and the most absolute despotism has been qualified and tempered by the genius of representative government."

Pitt's India
Bill

1784.

leave the line of his profession. But he could not bring himself to accept the chief command of the Indian Army, because, as he said, “in the present circumscribed situation of the Commander-in-Chief, without power or patronage, an officer could neither get credit to himself nor essentially serve the public;” and, as to the Governor-Generalship, he said that if he should relinquish the profession to which he had devoted his life from his youth upwards, and had “abandoned every consideration of happiness,” he might find himself “in competition with some person whose habits of business would render him much more proper for the office.”* Lord Shelburne had offered him the Governor-Generalship, together with the Chief Command of the Army, and he was now resolute, for these reasons, to accept both offices or none.

The decision was conveyed in August to his old friend Lord Sydney, then Secretary of State.† Cornwallis had distinctly declared, on this and other occasions, his desire for promotion in the military service of his country, to which, as both the King and the King’s Ministers freely admitted, no man had a better claim. George, indeed, had blurted out that it was a shame that Lord Cornwallis had not a better military appointment. But when some vacancies occurred at this time—as the Colonely of the Grenadier Guards and the Governorship of Plymouth—the King’s Ministers, in a spirit of the most inexcusable jobbery, nominated men whose pretensions were confined to their family connexions or political influence. This injustice Cornwallis resented with becoming dignity. He told Lord Sydney, and he told Mr. Pitt, that if they had informed him it would be for the benefit of the King and the King’s Government that his claims should be ignored in favour of others, he would not only have consented cheerfully to the arrangement, but have given up a part of his fortune, if required, to the recipients of the royal patronage. But he had been rudely set aside without explanation. So he left the presence of Lord Sydney, who had stammered out some lame excuses, with an intimation that the friendship between them was at an end; and he wrote to Mr. Pitt, saying, “I still

Treatment of
Lord Corn-
wallis.

* Lord Cornwallis to Lord Sydney, head of Cornwallis’s boyhood days. The August 4, 1784.—*Cornwallis Correspondence.* Ross “dear Tommy” to whom he addressed the letter quoted at page 5

† Lord Sydney was the Tom Towns-

1784. admire your character. I have still hopes that your abilities and integrity will preserve this distressed country ; I will not be base enough, from a sense of personal injury, to join faction, and endeavour, right or wrong, to obstruct the measures of Government ; but I must add—and with heartfelt grief I do it—that private confidence cannot easily be restored.” But it was restored—after a lapse of only two days. Cornwallis and the young Minister met by the request of the latter ; and Pitt offered him the post of Constable of the Tower, which he had before held for many years. Cornwallis declined the offer. But when Pitt said that nothing had been further from his intention than to slight one who had rendered such distinguished service to his country, and that if he had unwittingly offended, he could only ask pardon, and offer any reparation in his power, the generous nature of the soldier was satisfied ; he accepted the appointment ; and there was an end of the rupture between him and both Sydney and Pitt.

This was in November, 1784. The new India Bill was by this time in full working order ; and Mr. Dundas had become the Indian Minister, as the working member and real autocrat of the Board of Control. Cornwallis did not predict that much good would result from the arrangement ; for he thought that Dundas, though “a very clever fellow,” was “but a short-sighted politician.” But the latter was sufficiently far-seeing to be anxious to secure for India the services of so good a man as Cornwallis ; and the new year was not many weeks old, when Pitt wrote a friendly, flattering letter, pressing the Governor-Generalship again upon him, and earnestly requesting an interview. The result was, that Pitt asked him to talk the matter over with Dundas. When he met the Minister, Cornwallis thought that he espied trickery and intrigue ; that it was intended to smoothe down some ministerial difficulty, and had little reference either to what was due to him or what was due to the public. In order to propitiate him, Dundas said that it would be easy to amend certain provisions of the India Bill which restricted the powers of the Governor-General. But Cornwallis still thought that the whole affair savoured of an arrangement ; and so, after deliberating with himself for four-and-twenty hours, he respectfully declined the offer.*

* Lord Cornwallis to Colonel Ross, are : “I easily found out from him Feb. 23, 1785.—The words of the letter (Dundas) that, after having lost sight

1785.

On the 8th of February, 1785—almost at the very time when Pitt was pressing the Governor-Generalship on Lord Cornwallis*—Warren Hastings, amidst a shower of valedictory addresses, carrying with him the good wishes of large bodies of people, of all races and professions, walked down to the river-side at Calcutta, and embarked on board the pinnace which was to convey the departing Governor-General to the vessel then waiting to bear him to England. He was succeeded in the government by Mr. John Macpherson, the senior member of Council. In the course of the summer of that year, Lord Macartney, who had been Governor of Madras, went round to Calcutta, where, being determined to set the young gentlemen of the settlement an example of frugality and endurance, he walked out in the sun without an umbrella, and nearly died from the effects of his devotion. This was not, however, the only incident which distinguished his visit to Bengal. He received there a letter from the Court of Directors addressed to him as Governor-General.† The refusal of Lord Cornwallis to accept the office had been followed by the nomination of Lord Macartney, who had the claim of good Indian service, and who was on the spot to take up the reins of office. But the arrangement was not palatable to all the members of the King's Government; and I suspect that the “momentary rub among themselves,” of which Cornwallis had spoken as the cause of the renewal of the offer to him, was in reality a difference of opinion regarding the expediency of selecting Lord Macartney. But the latter nobleman had no greater desire than the former to be the successor of Warren Hastings. He required rest; he required, after the dangerous experiment of walking in the sun, a visit to a milder climate for the restora-

of my going for six months, it was now taken up to prevent some disagreement of the Cabinet. He told me that if I would say I would go, many things which I objected to in the bill should be altered. I was well aware of the danger of a declaration of that sort, and indeed from their manner of conducting business ever since their bill passed, their disagreements at home, and the circumstances attending the appointment of their generals, and the present sudden application to me, merely to get rid of a momentary rub among them-

selves, I was convinced it would be madness in me to engage, so that, after taking twenty-four hours to consider, I gave a very civil negative.”—*Cornwallis Correspondence*. Ross.

* In the above letter, dated Feb. 23, it is said that Pitt made the offer “a fortnight ago.”

† Lord Macartney was appointed Governor-General of India by a resolution of the Court, dated Feb. 17, 1785. The votes for and against were equal, and the decision was arrived at by lot.

1785. tion of his shattered health ; so he turned his face towards England, and left the interregnum of Mr. Macpherson to continue for another year.

Cornwallis in
Prussia.

In the mean while, work of another kind had been found for Lord Cornwallis. The continental relations of Great Britain were at that time in a state which it was impossible to regard without some apprehensions of evil. We were in a condition of most discouraging isolation. Our only friend and ally was Prussia ; and Frederick was not very eager to boast of the connexion. It was thought, however, that he might be persuaded to put aside the over-cautious reserve which stood in the way of a closer alliance between the two countries, and that this object might more readily be attained through the agency of some unaccredited Englishman of rank, than through the ordinary official channel of the British Minister at Berlin. It happened that Lord Cornwallis had been contemplating a continental tour with the avowed object of improving his professional knowledge by visiting the great Prussian Reviews. He was just the man, therefore, for the purpose, as one not likely to awaken the suspicions of the King. Solicited by our Ministers, he readily undertook to do his best, and at the end of the summer he crossed the Channel. His instructions inculcated caution. He was to listen rather than to talk ; to receive rather than to give ; to draw Frederick into an avowal of his wishes rather than to declare those of his own Court. But it was soon apparent to him that he was not likely to make much political progress in Prussia. He was disappointed with everything ; disappointed with his reception, disappointed with the reviews, and very glad when the time came to return to England. Before he set his face homewards, however, he

Interview with
Frederick the
Great.

had accomplished an interview with Frederick, which resulted in a clear declaration of the views and wishes of the great King. The growing infirmity of monarchs is the best security for peace. What Frederick might have said, years before, we can only conjecture ; but, in his decrepitude, he longed to be left to his repose, and the policy which suited him best was that which was most certain to have a pacific issue. He said, in effect, that England and Prussia were not strong enough to contend with France, Austria, and Russia, and that any open alliance between the two first-named powers might result in a

1785.

disastrous war. If Russia could be weaned from the Austrian connexion, a tripartite alliance might do something ; but England and Prussia alone would be powerless against those three great states, with all their lesser allies. England would have to bear the brunt of the war by sea, and Prussia by land ; and the astute monarch saw plainly that nothing but ruin could result from such a combination against him.*

Lord Cornwallis returned to England before the end of the year. On the 9th of January, 1786, Lord Macartney arrived from India. The question of the Governor-Generalship was now to be definitively settled. Lord Macartney had been formally appointed Governor-General ; but he desired to attach to his acceptance of the office certain conditions to which the King's Ministers demurred. He was an Irish Peer. He asked for an English Peerage. The Government thought that this should be rather a reward for good service done than a "bid" for good service to be done, and therefore refused to comply with his request. It would seem that they were not sorry to split with him. He had some enemies in the Cabinet, and external influences had been brought to bear against his succession.† Moreover, there was a growing conviction that Lord Cornwallis was the right man to be sent to India, if his

* Memorandum by Lord Cornwallis.—*Cornwallis Correspondence Ross*.—The following extract from the "Head" of Conversation is interesting, on more than one account. "The King said that he knew France was trying to hurt us everywhere; that she had sent people to India to disturb the tranquillity of that country, but they had returned without effecting anything, that she was busily employed in Ireland. He hoped we would lose no time in putting our affairs there on so safe a footing as to be in no danger of a civil war, which, on an appearance of a foreign one, France would not fail to use her utmost efforts to foment." This interview took place on September 17, 1785. Carlyle, in his "History of Frederick the Great," makes no mention of it; but it was well worthy of mention. He, however, speaks of a royal dinner-party, on a previous day, after a review at Gross-Tinz, at which entertainment were present "La Fayette, Cornwallis, and the Duke of York."

† This is very clearly stated in the following passage of a letter from Mr. Dundas, given in "Barlow's Life of Macartney." "You are rightly informed when you suppose that the appointment of Lord Macartney was not a favourite measure with several members of the administration. Neither was it popular with a great body of the directors and proprietors of the East India Company. I need not mention that it was not agreeable either to the partisans of Mr. Hastings or of Sir John Macpherson. When, therefore, against such an accumulation of discontent and opposition Mr. Pitt was induced by me to concur in the return of Lord Macartney to India as Governor-General, it was not unnatural that both of us should have felt hurt that he did not rather repose his future fortunes in our hands than make it the subject of a *sine qua non* preliminary. And I think, if Lord Macartney had known us as well then as he did afterwards, he would have felt as we did."

1786. scruples could be overcome. He had always believed that unless large powers were vested in him, he could render no service to his country. He desired to hold in his own hands both the supreme civil and the supreme military authority ; and, seeing that if thwarted, as Hastings had been by a factious opposition in the Council, he would have no real power of any kind, he declared it to be an essential condition of his acceptance of the office that he should be empowered on great occasions to act upon his own responsibility, against the votes of the majority of the Council. To these conditions Pitt and Dundas readily consented. They could not have placed these extended powers in any safer hands than those of Lord Cornwallis ; and in safe hands this extension of authority could not

Acceptance of
the Governor-
Generalship.

"The proposal of going to India," he wrote on the 23rd of February to Colonel Ross, "has been pressed upon me so strongly, with the circumstance of the Governor-General's being independent of his Council, as intended in Dundas's former bill, and having the supreme command of the military, that, much against my will, and with grief of heart, I have been obliged to say yes, and to exchange a life of ease and content, to encounter all the plagues and miseries of command and public station. I have this day notified my consent, and shall go down to-morrow for a few days to Culford."† It was all settled now. There was an end to the doubts, and questionings, and obstinate self-conflicts of years.

Of the two nominees, the rejected one was, probably, far the happier of the two. Lord Macartney is said to have been delighted with the result. "That he had a strong disinclination to accept the appointment," says his biographer, Mr. Barrow, "and that the conditions on which only he could accept it were made solely on public grounds, the following anecdote, obligingly communicated by Lady Macartney, is an unequivocal proof. Her ladyship being one evening at a large party, Lord Macartney came in, and being impatient to communicate some intelligence to her, took out a card, and

* Lord Cornwallis was appointed solution of the Court of Directors, dated Governor-General by an unanimous re- February 24, 1786.

† Cornwallis Correspondence. Ross.

1786

wrote with a pencil on the back of it as follows : ‘*I am the happiest man in England at this hour. Lord Cornwallis, I hear, is Governor-General of India.*’ The card is still in her ladyship’s possession, with the pencil writing upon it.”*

The King’s Ministers kept their promise, and prepared at once to bring in a supplementary Act of Parliament, explaining or amending the objectionable clauses in the India Bill of 1784.† It was certain that it would be opposed. The party who saw, or pretended to see, only a constitutional safeguard in such opposition as that with which Francis and Clavering had held in restraint the independent action of Governor-General Hastings, were alarmed and indignant at the thought of placing such large powers in the hands of a single man. It was to establish a gigantic despotism. So against this measure Edmund Burke lifted up his voice, declaring that it contemplated the introduction of an arbitrary and despotic government into India, on the false pretence of its tending to increase the security of our British Indian possessions, and to give fresh vigour, energy, and promptitude to the conduct of business, where before had been only weakness, decrepitude, and delay. To this Dundas replied in a convincing speech,

* Barlow’s Life of Macartney

† The following is the portion of the bill which relates to the extension of the powers of the Governor-General. It was “enacted, that when and so often as any measure or question shall be proposed or agitated in the Supreme Council at Fort William, in Bengal . . . whereby the interests of the said United Company, or the safety or tranquillity of the British Possessions in India, are or may be essentially concerned or affected, and the said Governor-General . . . shall be of opinion that it will be expedient either that the measures so proposed or agitated ought to be adopted or carried into execution, or that the same ought to be suspended, or wholly rejected, and the several other members of such Council then present shall dissent from such opinion, the said Governor-General, . . . and the Members of the said Council, shall communicate in Council to each other in writing, under their respective hands (to be recorded at large on their Secret Consultations), the respective grounds and reasons of their respective opinions, and

it, after considering the same, the said Governor-General, . . . and the other Members of the said Council, shall severally retain their opinions, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor-General . . . to make and declare any order (to be signed and subscribed by the said Governor-General . . .) for suspending or rejecting the measure or question so proposed or agitated, in part or in whole, or to make and declare such order and resolution for adopting and carrying the measure so proposed or agitated into execution, as the said Governor-General . . . shall think fit and expedient; which said last-mentioned order and resolution, so made and declared, shall be signed, as well by the said Governor-General . . . as by all the other Members of the Council then present, and shall be as effectual and valid to all intents and purposes as if all the said other Members had advised the same, or concurred therein.” The words omitted relate to the extension in like manner of the powers of the Governor of Madras and Bombay.

1786. which must have touched, in a sensitive place, Philip Francis, who had endeavoured to introduce a bill of his own—that arbitrary and despotic government might result from the action of two or three, no less than from the action of one; and that it was certain that all the mischief and misfortune that had, for many years, afflicted India, had arisen from the existence of party feelings and factious behaviour among the different members of Council. The bill was passed by large majorities in both Houses of Parliament.

1786. Before this bill had passed into law, Lord Cornwallis had sailed for India. He embarked on board the *Swallow* packet in the first week of May,* accompanied by his staff, which then consisted of his dear friend Colonel Ross, Captain Haldane, and Lieutenant Madden. It happened that among the passengers on board the *Swallow* was one of the ablest and most esteemed members of the Company's Civil Service. After many years of good work in India, where he had chiefly distinguished himself in the Revenue Department, John Shore had returned to England in the hope of ending his days there in the enjoyment of the very moderate competence which he had earned by honest exertion. But the high character which he carried home with him had recommended him to the Court of Directors for employment in a more important situation than any which he had yet held; and they had invited him to return to India to fill a coming vacancy in the Supreme Council. He had accepted the offer with manifest reluctance; but he had not proceeded far on his voyage, when the prospect before him sensibly brightened, and the regrets with which he had abandoned ease and happiness in England began to lose half their poignancy. He was soon in habits of intimacy with Lord Cornwallis—of intimacy cemented by mutual esteem; and there was in the disposition of the new Governor-General, and in the high sense of public duty which he was

* Lord Teignmouth, in his life of his father, says that Mr. Shore "sailed from Portsmouth on the 12th of April," but it is obvious, from a letter in the Cornwallis Correspondence, that the vessel had not left Portsmouth on the

39th. It is probable that Shore went on board in the river, and that the vessel sailed for Portsmouth on the 12th. The point, however, is of no importance

John Shore.

Embarcation
for India.

1786.

carrying out to his work, ample assurance that the Future of the Government of India would in many material points differ, most honourably, from the Past.*

Mr. Shore, who had served under the administration of Warren Hastings, knew well what kind of relations might subsist between a Governor-General and a Member of his Council. He had taken some part—undesignedly, perhaps, for he was eminently a man of peace—in the fierce dissensions which had agitated the settlement, and had for a time sided with Francis, rather on public grounds than by reason of any personal sympathies, for he had instructed the Councillor in Revenue matters, and was supposed to have written some of his minutes.† But he had returned to England in the vessel which carried Warren Hastings from India, and on board ship a close friendship had grown up between them. Hastings had turned the dreary inactivity of life at sea to account by devoting himself to literary pursuits, and among his other efforts in the Humanities he had paraphrased an ode of Horace into an affectionate poetical address to his friend. And Shore had seen quite enough, since his return to England, to cause him to regard the violent conduct of Hastings's opponents with disapprobation and dislike. He clearly discerned the malignant injustice with which the great Indian statesman was pursued;

* “Lord Cornwallis is a most amiable man, and fully deserves the character which he holds with the rest of the world. I am proud to say that my sentiments on political business and public principles correspond with his. He treats me with all possible regard and confidence, and I could not live on happier terms with him. He was also pressed into the service contrary to his inclinations. Colonel Ross, Captain Haldane, and Lieutenant Madden, are all respectable friends and agreeable companions”—*Correspondence of John Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth*

† A cotemporary pamphleteer (Captain Price) says, “That at one time Messrs Anderson and Ducarel were out of Calcutta, and Mr. Hastings, knowing that Mr. Shore was the only man that Mr. Francis had left to assist him in drawing up minutes, continued, as it was reported, to order Mr. Shore on an Embassy to the Rajah of Krishnagur,

with whom he had once resided, as collecting chief. Mr. Francis, having not one of his assistants at hand, fell sick, and could not attend at the council-table, but desired that he might have all minutes sent to him, and he would consider them, and give his opinion at a future meeting. After Mr. Hastings had laughed at him for his schoolboy truancy for ten days or a fortnight, he wrote privately to Mr. Shore to return to Calcutta. This Mr. Shore let Francis know, and he instantly grew better. This recovery Mr. Wheeler announced at the Council Board. Mr. Hastings said that he had known as much two days before, adding, that Mr. Shore was coming down. Whether Mr. Wheeler comprehended the jest or no, I know not, but Mr. Francis, after having taken a few doses of salts, to save appearances by making pale his visage, returned to his duty.”

1786. and no man knew better the eminent services which he had rendered to his country. But he had a keen sense, also, of the errors which Hastings had committed both in his public and his private life, and he felt that the political and social morality of the English in India alike demanded a sweeping reform.

The voyage to India.

Upon general subjects of this kind, and upon more particular questions of administration, Shore had so much to say, and Cornwallis was so well disposed to inquire and to listen, that the new Governor-General found that his voyage to India by no means covered a period of lost time. When he reached Calcutta, he was as well informed on Indian affairs as any man could be who had been fighting the battles of his country so long in the opposite hemisphere, and had never thought that Providence would cast his lot in the Eastern world. But, even in circumstances the most favourable, it is a strange and perplexing situation in which a man, whose experiences of other countries, however great, can neither guide nor help him, finds himself, when first called upon to administer the multitudinous affairs of our Eastern Empire. That empire, compared with the extent which it has now attained, was, when Cornwallis entered upon its government, one of very limited dimensions. But that which then contracted the sphere of our internal administration enlarged the scope of our foreign policy, and the unsettled state of our relations with the Princes and Chiefs of the neighbouring dominions was a source of even greater anxiety than the disorders which obstructed the domestic government of our own possessions. To be a little staggered and bewildered at first is the necessary condition of humanity in such a conjuncture; and Lord Cornwallis was not one to form more than a modest estimate of his individual power to cope with the difficulties which beset his position.

Arrival at Calcutta.

On the 11th of September, 1786, the *Swallow* anchored in the Hooghly, and on the following morning Lord Cornwallis disembarked with his staff. All the principal people of the settlement, headed by Mr. Macpherson, went down to the river-side to welcome him and to conduct him to the Fort, where his commissions were read, and he took the oaths of

1786

office.* It was a great event for Bengal; a great event for India. For the first time, an English nobleman of high rank and high character had appeared in Bengal, fresh from the Western world, knowing nothing of India but what he had read in books or gleaned from conversation; bringing a new eye, a new hand to the work before him; and having no regard for the traditions and the usages which had given the settlement so unsavoury a reputation. What had been heard of him before his coming was not much; but the little was of a nature to win the respect of some, perhaps to excite the alarm of others, and there was a general feeling of a coming change. It was known before his arrival, that in England, beset by petitioners for place and patronage as he was from the very moment of his acceptance of office, he had resolutely refused to make any promises even to his nearest friends.† And now it soon became apparent that he was proof against all similar importunities in India. He knew that he had a great work before him, and that he could do it only with the cleanest hands. If he had been followed to India by wistful hangers-on and hungry parasites, he could have accomplished little; but the purity and disinterestedness of his conduct were so

* The following is the account of the Governor-General's arrival, as given in a contemporary Calcutta journal. I am indebted for it to an interesting volume of extracts from the Indian newspapers of the last century, published by my friend Mr Seton-Karr, now a judge of the High Court of Calcutta.

“*Thursday, Sept 11, 1786. Calcutta*—On Monday last arrived in the river the Right Honourable the Earl Cornwallis, and on Tuesday morning he came on shore. His Lordship was met at the water-side by a party of the body-guard; from thence he walked into the Fort, where he was received by the late Governor-General with every respect due to the dignity of his rank and character. The troops were under arms, and received his Lordship as their future Commander-in-Chief with all the military honours. His Lordship's commission investing him with the extensive powers of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief was then read, after which he retired to breakfast, when several gentlemen had the honour of

being introduced to his Lordship. With Lord Cornwallis came Mr Shore (though indisposition prevented him from attending his Lordship in person), Colonel Ross, Captain Haldane, and Mr Maddox, a nephew of his Lordship.”

† “Earl Cornwallis has conducted himself since his appointment, with singular reserve. To the numerous solicitations which have been poured in upon him from all quarters, he has given the most peremptory refusal and has informed his friends that it is his determined purpose not to make any arrangements, nor to give any appointments, until he is seated in his government. The noble Earl takes out but three friends—Colonel Ross, who is to be his secretary, Captain Haldane, and Captain Maddox. Colonel Taleton has come home in the prospect of securing an appointment from Lord Cornwallis, but the Colonel has received the same answer with all the other applicants, that the noble Lord had it not in his power to make a single appointment in England.”—*Calcutta Gazette*.

1786. apparent from the beginning, that people soon began to acquiesce in that which, however inconvenient to them, they knew had its root only in the public virtue of their new ruler.

He was a kind-hearted man, hospitable and courteous, and the social amenities ever due from the Governor-General to his companions in exile were dispensed with no niggardly hand. At that time, the spacious and imposing edifice on the skirts of the great plain of Calcutta, which now receives the Viceroys of India on their arrival, was only a design for future execution. Lord Cornwallis occupied a house of inferior pretensions to many that were held by the leading servants of the Company. But he was always averse to pomp and display, and was well content to divest himself as much as possible of the accessories of State. "My life is not a very agreeable one," he wrote soon after his arrival, "but I have ventured to leave off a good deal of the buckram, which rather improves it." The inconvenience of limited space, as an impediment to hospitality on a grand scale, was obviated by a resort on great occasions to one of the public buildings of Calcutta. The guests of the Governor-General were received in the "Old Court House."^{*} At these entertainments there was no lack of geniality, but an example of moderation was set which permanently influenced the social usages of the English in India. It was soon known that hard drinking and high play were distasteful to Lord Cornwallis, and would be discountenanced by him. And from that time a steady improvement supervened upon the social morality of the Presidency. People began to keep earlier hours; there was less of roystering and of gambling

* The following is the account of the English Government House, given by a cotemporary French writer, M. Grandpré. "The Governor-General of the English settlements east of the Cape of Good Hope resides at Calcutta. As there is no palace yet built for him, he lives in a house on the Esplanade, opposite the Citadel. The house is handsome, but by no means equal to what it ought to be for a person of so much importance. Many private individuals in the town have houses as good, and if the Governor were disposed to any extraordinary luxury, he must curb his inclination for want of the necessary

accommodation of 100m. The house of the Governor of Pondicherry is much more magnificent." There is a question at this time as to the spot on which the old Government House stood. An ingenious writer in the *Calcutta Review* (the Rev. Mr. Long, I believe) says "Opinions differ as to the precise locality of the old Government House. Some say it was where the Treasury is now, and others at the south-east corner of Government-place." The "old Court House," which also did duty for a town-hall, stood on the site now occupied by the Scotch church. It was pulled down in 1792.

1786

than before his arrival, and, as a natural result, less duelling and suicide, both of which were fearfully rampant at the time of Lord Cornwallis's arrival in Calcutta.

He was a tolerant and charitable man, too ; and he was fain to attribute the irregularities, which forced themselves on his notice, in a great measure to the "intense heat and unhealthiness of the climate." He had arrived in the worst month of the year—the month in which the heavy rains of the preceding quarter begin to intermit, and the saturated plains exhale a steamy fog more deleterious to European health than the fierce sun and the arid wind of the summer solstice. His correspondence during the first few months of his residence in India indicate the lassitude which falls on all men in that trying interval between the hot and the cold seasons. But his health was not injuriously affected by the climate, and his only complaint was that it was not pleasant. Perhaps, in his inmost heart, he sometimes repented of the step that he had taken, and wished that he was again at Culford. It is certain that his "heart untravelled" often turned fondly towards the children whom he had left behind him, and it was only by a strong effort that he could reconcile himself to his lot, by thinking that his tenure of office in India would enable him, for their sakes, to increase his fortune. He had not been many days in India when he wrote to Lord Brome, saying, "I am always thinking of you with the greatest anxiety. I have no fear but for your health. If that is good, I am sure everything will be right. You must write to me by every opportunity, and longer letters than I write to you ; for I have a great deal more business every day than you have upon a whole school-day, and I never get a holiday. I have rode once upon an elephant, but it is so like going in a cart that you would not think it very agreeable."^{*} A little later, he wrote to his boy about the Order of the Garter, which, shortly after his departure from England, the King had spontaneously conferred upon him. "You will have heard that soon after I left England I was elected Knight of the Garter, and very likely laughed at me for wishing to wear a blue riband over my fat belly. I could have excused myself in the following lines :

* Cornwallis Correspondence Ross

1786.

Behold the child, by nature's sickly law,
 Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw ;
 Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
 A little louder, but as empty quute,
 Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his ripe stage,
 And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age

But I can assure you, upon my honour, that I neither asked for it nor wished for it. The reasonable object of ambition to a man is to have his name transmitted to posterity for eminent services rendered to his country and to mankind. Nobody asks or cares whether Hampden, Marlborough, Pelham, or Wolfe were Knights of the Garter." This is very pleasant in its good sense, its good feeling, and, above all, its undeniable truth. It is, moreover, essentially characteristic of the writer; for he was the least ambitious and self-seeking of public men, and if he could only serve the State and benefit his family, he was content. The Blue Riband was really nothing to him. He could afford to laugh at it. "I am a Knight and no Knight," he wrote in another letter to his son; "for my stars, garters, and ribands are all lost in Arabia, and some wild Arab is now making a figure with *Honi soit qui mal y pense* round his kneec.* I hope you have got French enough to construe that, but I own it is not a very easy sentence. If I continue to hear good accounts of you, I shall not cry after my stars and garters. . . . I think, upon the whole, as you intend your bay horse for a hunter, you were right to cut off his tail."

Thoughts of this kind keep men alive in India. In few breasts have the domestic affections been more deeply rooted than in that of Lord Cornwallis. The burning sun of India took nothing from their greenery and freshness. Amidst the incessant toil and anxious responsibility of his twofold office,

* They seem, however, to have been recovered, or another set of insignia was sent, for the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 15th of March, 1787, says "We had the pleasure of announcing to the public in last *Gazette* the arrival of the Blue Ribbon, and all the insignia of the Order of the Garter, for the Right Honourable the Governor-General His Lordship, having been authorised to make his own choice of the persons to perform the ceremony of investiture, was pleased to nominate the Honourable Charles Stuart and John Shore, Esquires, two members

of the Supreme Council, to execute that office, and to fix on Thursday last for the purpose. Accordingly, in presence of a numerous and splendid company, his Lordship was invested at the Government House with the Ribbon by Mr. Stuart, and by Mr. Shore with the Garter, when a salute of twenty-one guns was fired from Fort William, and his Lordship received the congratulations of the company present, on being honoured with so distinguished and well-earned a mark of his royal master's regard and approbation."

1786.

he was sustained by thoughts of his Suffolk home. "Let me know that you are well, and that you are doing well," he wrote to his children, "and I can be happy even in Calcutta." He had found that his work was very onerous and his duties very unpleasant—especially unpleasant, it may be said, to a good-tempered, kindly hearted man, who was always very happy when he was doing some good office to another—for his public duty was continually bringing him into conflict with private interest. There was necessarily much perplexity in the newness of his situation, and many points upon which time alone could enable him to form self-satisfying and conclusive opinions. But amidst all the doubts and uncertainties which distracted him, one clear demonstrable truth gleamed out from the surrounding darkness. He had an overpowering conviction that the prosperity of the British Empire in India depended more upon the character of the European functionaries employed in its administration than upon anything in the world beside. He could see, somewhat indistinctly, perhaps, at first, that the system itself was bad ; but he knew that the best systems in the world must fail if its agents were wanting in wisdom and integrity. What Mr. John Macpherson had called—a little too blandly, perhaps—the "relaxed habits" of the public service of India was an insuperable obstacle to successful administration. There was nothing strange or inexplicable in the state of things which then existed. In good truth, it was the most natural thing in the world—to be accounted for without any large amount of philosophic penetration. The East India Company had not at that time learnt to appreciate the great truth, which soon afterwards became the very root of their marvellous prosperity, that good pay is the parent of good service. They had granted to their servants only a small official pittance, with the tacit understanding that the small pay was to be atoned for by the great opportunities of official position. It was a very old story ; but so curious, that even now it may be worth telling in detail.

When, in the reign of James the First, Sir Thomas Roe ^{Rise and pro-} went out as Ambassador to the Court of the Mogul, and took ^{gress of the} Company's ^{Civil Service.} a comprehensive survey of the Company's establishments, his

1600—1700. quick eye hit the blot at once. He saw that their servants, being permitted to trade on their own account, neglected the affairs of their masters. How could anything else be expected? What did they leave their homes for?—for what did they banish themselves to a wretched country, and consent to live far away from all the amenities of civilisation? The Private Trade was naturally more to them than the Public Trade. The ambassador, therefore, recommended the Company to prohibit it altogether, and to grant sufficient salaries to their servants. “Absolutely prohibit the private trade,” he said, “for your business will be better done. I know this is harsh. Men profess they care not for bare wages. But you will take away this plea if you give great wages to their content; and then you know what you part from. But then you must make good choice of your servants, and have fewer.” He was a great man—obviously in advance of his age! But it took nearly two centuries to ingraft this truth on the understanding of the Company.

And so their servants, as they settled down, first in one factory, then in another, took their bare wages, and made what money they could by trade. It had not been made worth their while to be diligent and honest servants; and, cut off from their employers by thousands of miles of sea, which it then took five or six months, and often more, to traverse, they did not stand in much fear of the controlling authority at home. Every now and then some one was sent out with special powers to set the different factories in order, and to reform the establishments; but it was a mercy if, in a little time, he did not mar what he was sent to mend, and, being more powerful than all the rest, become more profligate too.

Still, if there was not much order, there was some form. A system of promotion was established which, with but slight variation, lasted not far from two centuries. It was laid down in London in the following terms, and carried out at all the factories: “For the advancement of our apprentices,” said the Court of Directors, “we direct that, after they have served the first five years, they shall have 10*l.* per annum for the two last years; and, having served these two years, to be entartayned one yeare longer as writers, and have writers’ salary; and having served that yeare, to enter into the degree

of factors, which otherwise would have been ten years. And, 1600—1700.
knowing that a distinction of titles is in many respects necessary, we do order that when the apprentices have served their times, they be stiled *writers*; and when the writers have served their times, they be called *factors*; and factors having served their times, to be stiled *merchants*; and merchants having served their times, to be stiled *senior merchants*.” After a time, the style and rank of apprentice ceased, but the title of “writer,” “factor,” “junior merchant,” and “senior merchant,” lasted long after the civilians had ceased altogether to trade—lasted, we may say, almost as long as the Company itself.

A clear idea of one of the Company’s establishments, at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century, may be derived from a little volume of travels written by one Charles Lockyer, and published in 1711. The most flourishing of their settlements at that time was Madras. Mr. Lockyer says, “that it was the grandest and the best ordered. As it surpasses their other settlements in grandeur, so the orders of the Council are more regarded and punctually executed, and each member has a respect proportionably greater than others shown to him.” The civil establishment consisted of a president, with a salary of 200*l.* per annum, and gratuity of 100*l.*; six councillors, with salaries from 100*l.* to 40*l.* a year, according to rank; six senior merchants, 40*l.* each; two junior merchants, at 30*l.* per annum; five factors, at 15*l.*; and ten writers at 5*l.* per annum. Married men were allowed “diet money” besides their pay, at a rate of from five to ten pagodas (say from 2*l.* to 4*l.*) a month. “But for inferior servants, who dine at the general table, they have only washing and oyl for lamps extraordinary.” The Company’s servants lived together in the old fort. “The Governour’s lodgings,” says Mr. Lockyer, “take up about a third part of the inner fort, is three stories high, and has many appartments in it. Two or three of the Council have their rooms there, as well as several inferior servants; the ‘countant’s and secretary’s offices are kept one story up; but the consultation-room is higher, curiously adorned with fire-arms, in several figures, imitating those in the armory of the Tower of London.” There were two common tables; one at which the Governor

1600—1700. and the higher servants dined ; another appropriated to the factors and writers—"differing only in this," says Mr. Lockyer—"here you have a great deal of punch and little wine ; there what wine you please, and as little punch." The Governor went abroad with an escort of native peons, "besides his English guards to attend him," with two Union flags carried before him, and "country musick enough to frighten a stranger into a belief the men were mad."*

This account of the factory at Madras may, with slight variations, be held to describe also the factory at Surat, the only one which at that time could vie with it. The salaries were nearly the same, and the customs of the settlement almost identical. It would appear, however, that all the Company's servants (sitting according to their rank) dined at one table, which is said to have been kept up in great style—"all the dishes, plates, and drinking-cups being of massive and pure silver." A band of music attended the President at dinner, and when the kabobs came in after the soup, and the curry after the kabobs, there was a flourish of trumpets to announce each arrival.

The cost of all this was doubtless very small, and the parade thereof very modest, judged by the standard of the present times. But those were the early days of the Company, who started from small beginnings, and were proceeding upon what was then called a "purely mercantile bottom." They were, therefore, not very well pleased when the ship-captains carried home to them grievous accounts of the pomp and extravagance of their servants ; and so they set themselves to work, heart and soul, to correct this licentiousness. Next to the matter of good investments, it was for a long time to come their leading idea to inculcate personal economy and purity of life ; and though the thrift was somewhat exaggerated, it cannot be said that there was not some reason for the uneasiness that they felt.

The seventeenth century closed in darkly and turbulently upon the Company's establishments in all parts of India. East and West it was all the same. Bengal vied with Surat in the

* This writer gives a minute account of the trade carried on by the Company's servants. He says, that as it was no uncommon thing to make fifty per cent. by a venture, money borrowed at twenty-five per cent. from a native capitalist turned out very well.

lawlessness and licentiousness of the English factories. The 1700—1800. fierce internece contentions which arose among the Company's servants were the greatest scandal of all. Now-a-days, when members of Council fall out, they write strongly-worded minutes against each other, content with a war of words. At the end of the eighteenth century they "went out," according to the most approved laws of honour, and fired pistols at each other; but at the close of the seventeenth they used their fists, supplemented by an occasional cudgel—the *argumentum baculum* being held in great esteem in the English councils. The President kept his councillors in order with a staff, and sometimes enforced his authority with such a lavish expenditure of blows, that human nature could not bear up without complaining. One unfortunate member of the Civil Service of the period complained that he had received from the President "two cuts in the heads, the one very long and deep, the other a slight thing in comparison to that; then a great blowe on my left arme, which has enflamed the shoullder, and deprived me of the use of that limbe; on my right side a blowe in my ribs, just beneath the pap, which is a stoppage to my breath, and makes me incapable of helping myself; on my left hip another, nothing inferior to the first; but, above all, a cut on the brow of my eye." Truly a hazardous service; but there were greater dangers even than these cudgellings, for it was reported home to the Company, in 1696-97, that there had been a plot among their servants at Surat to murder the President. "There is strong presumption that it was intended first that the President should be stabbed; when hopes of that failed by the guards being doubled, it seems poison was agreed upon, and all bound to secrecy upon a horrid imprecation of damnation to the discoverer, whom the rest were to fall upon and cut off."^{*}

In Bengal, matters were in no better state. That settlement was not then what it afterwards came to be—the chief seat of English trade and English government—but was looked upon, by reason of its remoteness, as a sort of outlying factory of no great credit or promise. The Company's establishment was then at Chuttanutty, which has since come to

* MS. Records

1700-1800 be called Calcutta, a place then of no great account ; and the Company's servants, under the chieftainship of Job Charnock, had not lived together more peacefully than their brethren at Surat. Charnock appears to have been a bold bad man, half a heathen, immoderately addicted to fighting, and not only contentious himself, but the cause of contention among others. As a man of business he was slothful in the extreme, hated writing letters and recording "consultations" for the perusal of his masters at home, and therefore threw himself into the hands of a fellow named Hall, "captain of the soldiers," who kept a punch-house and a billiard-table, and soon came to rule the settlement. There were besides, at that time, among the chief servants of the Company, a Mr. Ellis, who is said to have been as ignorant as Charnock was slothful ; and one Charles Pale, who was as fond of fighting as his chief, and "whose masterpiece," it is said, "was to invent differences between man and man, and deeply swear to the most extravagant lies he could invent." Things were, indeed, in so bad a state, that Sir John Gouldsburgh went round from Madras to reduce them to order. Before he arrived, Charnock and Pale had died ; and so two obstacles to the reformation of the settlement were removed.

The equanimity of the Company was at this time much disturbed by the bad writing and the bad morals of their servants. Whether there was any connexion discovered between the two is not very apparent, though more unlikely relationships have ere now been detected. It would be hard to judge by their penmanship some public men whom I could name. But in the early days of the East India Company's establishments, bad writing may have been the direct result of bad morals—the feeble, shaky, indistinct letters of the morning clearly reflecting the debauch overnight. Be this as it may, the managers at home wrote out in their general letter of the 5th of January, 1710-11 : "We find the papers, in the packets and other writings, are very badly performed. We expect this to be remedied ; and if any of the writers don't write so good hands as might be expected, we hope they will improve and do better. If, through pride or idleness, they, or any other with you, will not, give them fair warning, and if they don't mend, dismiss them our service.

The same we say of all that are immoral and won't be re- 1700—1800 claimed. And let this be a general rule for all time to come.”* This, at all events, is short, sharp, and decisive. But the Company had, in addition to these general orders, some specific rules to prescribe. They were always steady advocates and promoters of the messing system. They believed that a general table tended greatly to good morals as well as to public economy. But the Company's servants, in spite of orders from home, were continually drifting into more independent habits. The restraint of the general table was irksome to them; they liked better to receive “dust money,” and to provide for themselves. The Company thought that this was provocative of extravagance and licentiousness, so they wrote out to Bengal, saying: “We observe in your letter by the *Recovery*, you keep no general table, which we don't like, for the following reasons: Our factors and writers are thereby exposed to a loose way of living, to loss of time, and ill company, which, by being at a general table, would be prevented; but business is not so likely to be well minded, and they have specious pretences for their absence if found fault with. Besides, when they are every day at meals, under the eye of their superiors, they will be necessitated to observe a better decorum; and if any of them are careless, extravagant, and otherwise blameworthy, they will be soon reclaimed, when they know that they must every day expect to hear of it from you, the President and Council; and then we are sure we shall be at a less charge by a general table, if any tolerable care be taken therein, than we are by making allowances to each severally.”† The thrift of the Company was sure to creep, sooner or later, into these admonitions; but it is to their credit that we soon find them falling back upon the moralities, for they go on to say: “We have reason to believe what is told us, that those allowances give some of our servants the temptations, and, of consequence, expose them to drunkenness and lasciviousness; and we would take away the temptation, looking upon it as a certain rule, if they once lose their virtue, we have no reason long to expect their fidelity. For all these reasons, we require you to restore the general table; and if you can give us any that you think have greater

* MS Records.

† Ibid.

1700—1800 weight to the contrary, when we hear them you shall know our minds in future.” Then the instruction proceeds in a right good paternal spirit: “Our main danger in this is to remove all occasions from our servants of debauchery, and being tainted by ill example, which is very infectious to young people; also, to keep them under a regular and virtuous course of living, and thereby to have our own business better minded, and the interest of the Company promoted. And to render this our design more effectual, we direct that you, the President and Council, do, at certain standing seasons, set apart a time to inquire into the behaviour of all our factors and writers, of the persons under whom they are; and, calling them severally before you, let them know the account you have of them, and, as they deserve, either admonish or commend them.” Then comes another practical remedy for licentiousness. It was thought as desirable that the younger Company’s servants should lodge under a general roof as that they should board at a common table: so the Company issued a prohibition against promiscuous lying, or, as they called it, *laying*, up and down in the town: “We positively direct that all our unmarried young people do lodge in our own factory, if there be accommodation for them, and not lay up and down in the town, which exposes them to several inconveniences.” Neither these rules nor these admonitions appear to have had much effect; for the Company soon afterwards were driven to prescribe a penalty for the infraction of their mandates. If any Company’s servant proved to be incorrigible, he was to be sent home. “If any factor or writer,” says the Court’s general letter of the 2nd of February, 1712-13, “proves not diligent, but idle or vicious, send them home; don’t let them stay to infect others; we know no better way to deal with them.”

Meanwhile, however, the President and Council of Bengal contrived to give their masters some “reasons that have greater weight to the contrary,” in respect of the alleged advantages of the “general table,” especially protesting that it was by no means an economical institution; so the Court gave way, especially, they said, “as in your consultations you make it plain that we shall, in your opinion, be great savers by the diet money.” “Let us find,” they add, “you will all

be faithful and diligent for us, and not make our benefit 1700—1800. always give place to yours, as though the proverb was, ‘*Self—and then the Company:*’”

This was written in 1714-15. Some twelve or thirteen years later, sad news came to England of the addiction of the Company’s servants to the vice of gambling. These tidings greatly disquieted the souls of the worthy managers of Leadenhall, who determined to check by stringent measures the destructive practice. So they wrote out a general letter, saying: “We are greatly concerned to hear that the mischievous vice of gaming continues, and even increases, among our covenant servants, free merchants, and others, residing at our settlements in India, for great sums of money, and that the women also are infected therewith; by which means many persons have been ruined, as well on board ship as on shore. Of this there are several flagrant instances. By Act of Parliament, all gaming here above 10*l.* is strictly prohibited, under severe penalties. That we may do what in us lies to prevent the evils which, sooner or later, generally attend all gamesters, and frequently prove their ruin, we do hereby peremptorily forbid all manner of gaming whatsoever, in any of our settlements or elsewhere in India, to the amount of 10*l.* or upwards; and if any of our covenant servants, or others in our employ—whether civil, maritime, or military, or any free merchants under our protection—shall have been discovered to have played at any sort of game, for the value of 10*l.* sterling, or upwards, at a time, and be thereof convicted before you by two creditable witnesses (which witnesses we require that you shall be always ready to hear and admit of them), such offender, be he who he will, and in what station soever, shall, *ipso facto*, be sent home and dismissed the Company’s service by the first shipping, as likewise all free merchants, and all women, married or unmarried, whether belonging to our covenant servants, or who are under our protection.”*

It is easy to drive a coach-and-four through such prohibitory enactments as these; and in all probability, therefore, they were found as dead letters. A man who may play for 9*l.* 19*s.* “at a time” may win or lose a large sum of

* MS. Records.

1700—1800. money in the course of a night. For whatever the intended meaning of the interdict may have been, the actual prohibition seems only to have extended to the staking of 10*l.*, or upwards, on any one game. Any difficulty on this score, however, does not seem to have occurred to the Company, who regarded rather the obstacles in the way of the detection of the offenders, and therefore offered a premium to those who would inform against their comrades. “We easily foresee,” they wrote, “that the reproach of being an informer may keep back persons who may know of such gaming from discovering of it: to prevent this, we direct and order that you enter into your consultations a particular account, from time to time, of the persons who shall be proved guilty of such gaming” [they were before ordered to be sent home], “as also of the accuser or accusers; and for the encouragement of such accuser, if he be a covenant servant, we direct that he shall have a year’s standing allowed him in our service, and be further entitled to our favour as a person inclined to check this vile practice.” This was clearly an error, and a very base one. If the Company were to have either gamesters or informers in their service, I would have given them the former for choice. Did the Company think to take away “the reproach” of betraying a friend and companion by paying the betrayer for the dirty job? Would “a year’s standing” wash him white? He, who would take the forty pieces, would not only game but cheat at cards or at dice.

But gaming was only one kind of extravagance of which the Company’s servants were, in the opinion of their masters, guilty to a most reprehensible extent. There were others which demanded suppression by the strong hand of authority. The civilians were waxing proud, ostentatious, and self-indulgent—keeping many servants, horses, and equipages, in a faint attempt at Oriental pomp. Quiet homely men were they in Leadenhall-street, and they could not tolerate the airs of their factory servants. So, in December, 1731, they wrote out to Bengal, saying, that none the least of the complaints from that place were of the “extravagant way of living” common among their servants. “We can only recommend it very seriously,” they said, “to our President, that he shows a good example of frugality, by keeping a decent

retinue, such as formerly was practised, for the dignity of his station, and not fall into the foppery of having a sett of musick at his table, and a coach-and-six, with guards and running footmen, as we are informed is now practised, not only by the President, but some of the inferior rank." The sultanising process, it appears, was already going on bravely ; and I am not quite sure that it was sound policy in Leaden-hall-street to endeavour to restrain it.

Perhaps, indeed, notwithstanding their thirst, there was some glimmering perception in the minds of these city merchants that pomp and parade might have its uses in India, for they wrote out soon afterwards, not without some logical confusion, saying : " That a distinction and decorum ought to be kept for the President and Council we think it reasonable, and this we ourselves would encourage, but should be glad that this was brought down to the old standard, when a President used to be satisfied with a palanquin, and two men only went with arms before ; and in that time we don't find that our President had less respect shown him by the natives than now. However, as times are altered, and that it may be thought necessary to make some more outward show than formerly, we first recommend to you, if possible, that you bring it back to the old standard, and exercise in every respect frugality, as well in outward show as in your private way of living. If you should think it fit, by the alteration of times, or any other reasons, to keep up the dignity and honour of your employers by making some show when you appear abroad, it is our positive order that none of you, or any of our servants, shall exceed the rules we now lay down, which are, that the President, at his own expense, may make use of a coach-and-four, and each of the gentlemen in council a coach-and-pair, and that any of our other servants, and the free merchants under our covenants who think they can afford it, a single chaise or saddle-horse." And, the better to enforce this rule, the President was instructed to send home every year an exact list of every person under him, and of the equipages and horses kept by each, " that we may judge whether such persons are fit to be continued in our service."

Neither these admonitions nor these warnings had much effect upon the Company's servants, who grew more licentious

1700—1800. and more troublesome as time advanced, living extravagant lives, and running into debt with native merchants, “so as to bring you under dependency to them.” The Company were continually writing out to their Presidents to set a good example to their junior servants, and to report their misdeeds. But the Presidents appear to have done neither the one thing nor the other. So the Company again wrote out, in language of grave remonstrance to their servants. In the Court’s general letter of the 8th of January, 1752, they say : “ Much has been reported of the great licentiousness which prevails in your place [Bengal], which we do not choose particularly to mention, as the same must be evident to every rational mind. The evils resulting therefrom to those there and to the Company cannot but be apparent, and it is high time proper methods be applied for producing such a reformation as comports with the laws of sound religion and morality, which are in themselves inseparable. We depend upon you who are principals in the management to set a real good example, and to influence others to follow the same, in such a manner as that virtue, decency, and order be well established, and thereby induce the natives round you to entertain the same high opinion which they formerly had of the English honour and integrity—a point of the highest moment to us.” But these sermons were worse than profitless ; for instead of their producing any reformatory effect upon the lives of the Company’s servants, the rebellious civilians laughed at their masters, and ridiculed their homilies outright. It would appear that there were never wanting persons to inform the Directors at home of what was going on in their distant settlements. These were, probably, the ship-captains who brought home the news of the factories, together with the merchandise of the East, and probably ingratiated themselves with their employers by condemning the irregularities of their brethren. At all events, the Court were credibly informed of the manner in which the letter last quoted was received in Bengal : “ We are well assured,” they wrote out again, in January, 1754, “ that the paragraph in our letter of the 8th of January, 1752, relating to the prevailing licentiousness of your place, was received by many of our servants in superior stations with

the great contempt, and was the subject of much indecent ridicule ; but whatever turn you may give to our admonitions—call it preaching, or what you please—unless a stop is put to the present licentious career, we can have no dependence on the integrity of our servants, now or in future ; for it is too melancholy a truth that the younger class tread too closely upon the heels of their superiors, and, as far as circumstances will admit, and even farther, copy the bad examples which are continually before their eyes.” It was plainly, the Directors continued, no use to expostulate any further, so, as supreme masters, they were determined to put forth their authority, and to dictate commands which “ all who value their continuance in our service” were called upon to obey. I now give these commands in their integrity. They illustrate very forcibly the simplicity of the Directors of those days, who appear readily to have believed that such instructions as these would have a mighty effect upon the morals of their servants :

“ That the Governor and Council, and all the rest of our servants, both civil and military, do constantly and regularly attend the divine worship at church every Sunday, unless prevented by sickness or some other reasonable cause, and that all the common soldiers who are not on duty, or prevented by sickness, be also obliged to attend.

“ That the Governor and Council do carefully attend to the morals and manner of life of all our servants in general, and reprove and admonish them when and whenever it shall be found necessary.

“ That all our superior servants do avoid, as much as their several situations will allow of it, an expensive manner of living, and consider that, as the representatives of a body of merchants, a decent frugality will be much more in character.

“ That you take particular care that our younger servants do not launch into expenses beyond their incomes, especially upon their first arrival ; and we here lay it down as a standing and positive command, that no writer be allowed to keep a palanquin, horse, or chaise, during the term of his writership.

“ That you set apart one day in every quarter of the year, and oftener if you find it necessary, to inquire into the gene-

1700—1800.

1700—1800 ral conduct and behaviour of all our servants below the Council, and enter the result thereof in your Diary for our observation."

The conquest of Bengal imparted a new aspect to the character of the Company's service. Indeed, it may almost be said that the Civil Service proper dates from that momentous epoch. Up to that point in the history of our Indian Empire the Company's servants had been almost exclusively merchants. Then they grew into administrators. What were known as the "Company's affairs" had been simply affairs of trade—buying and selling, the provision of investments. But after this new compact with the Soubahdar there was revenue to be collected, and justice to be administered, and relations with native Princes to be established. It was a great turning-point; and if the Company had been wise in their generation, they would have looked the position in the face, and placed their servants on an entirely new footing with respect to their permitted sources of emolument. Nearly a century and a half had passed away since Sir Thomas Roe had recommended them to give "great wages, to the content" of their servants; "for then you know what you part from," but they had not taken the hint. And even now, when they found that they had emerged from the proprietorship of a few factories into the sovereignty of great provinces, they still could not recognise the wisdom of detaching their servants from trade, and depriving them, by the grant of liberal salaries, of all pretexts for receiving bribes from the natives of the country. In 1758 they thought they were straining their liberality by raising the pay of a writer to 40*l.* per annum. "We do hereby direct," they wrote out to Bengal, "that the future appointment to a writer for salary, diet money, and all allowances whatever, be four hundred current rupees per annum, which mark of our favour and attention, properly attended to, must prevent their reflection on what we shall further order in regard to them, as having any other object or foundation than their particular interest or happiness." They then referred to their letter of the 23rd of January, 1754, the instructions contained in which they were determined to enforce, "from a persuasion that the indigence of our junior servants, which may too often have been the effect of their vices and the

imitation of their seniors, hath not a little contributed to increase that load of complaints which have been so strongly and repeatedly urged by the Nabob in regard to the abuse of *dusticks*, a practice we have ever disclaimed ; and are determined to show in future the strongest marks of our resentment to such as shall be guilty of, and do most positively order and direct (and will admit of no representation for your postponing the execution of it) that no writer whatsoever be permitted to keep either palanquin, horse, or chaise during his writership, on pain of being immediately dismissed the service.”

In this despatch the Company spoke of “the distressed situation of our once-flourishing settlement of Fort William.” But the settlement was flourishing as it had never flourished before. The Company’s servants had taken up a trade beside which every other was poor and unremunerative. They had become king-makers, and untold wealth was flowing into their coffers. The English were now the dominant race in Bengal, and there was nothing that they could not do. For the first time they knew their power, and they turned their knowledge to profitable account. The feeble natives could not resist the white men, but they could buy them. It was soon seen that they all had their price. The situation was new to the Company’s servants, and it dazzled them, so that they could not, or they would not, see right from wrong. Large fortunes were made in an incredibly short space of time. It was the blackest period of all in the whole history of the Indian service.

There is nothing strange in the picture. The Company’s servants were unaccustomed to power, and they did not know how to exercise it with moderation. Between the date of the conquest of Bengal and Clive’s return to Calcutta in 1765, there was more money made and more wrong done by the Company’s civilians than in any like number of years twice told. But Clive went out again, resolute to “cleanse the Augoean stable;”* and whilst he was instituting great reforms, the honest Directors in Leadenhall-street were still maundering

* We print in the Appendix a portion of a despatch, signed by himself alone, which he addressed to the Court of Directors in 1765. Only a few sentences are given in Malcolm’s “Life of Clive.”

1700—1800. about the irregularities of their younger servants. It always distressed them greatly to think that their young writers were not so thrifty in their habits or so regular in their lives as they might have been ; and they were continually exhorting their high functionaries to bring the mischievous youngsters to account. Send us home the names, they said, of those who will not obey you. But Clive was sending home his lists at this time, and they contained the names of men, not low down in the roll of the Company's establishment, but up among the great merchants. Still the Company kept to their text ; and, still solicitous for the morals of their young men, wrote out to the Governor, in 1765, that all superior servants were to lodge in the new fort so soon as accommodation could be provided, and not, as they did of old, “to lay up and down in the town.” Of course Government were no longer to make them “an allowance of house-rent.” Although this was imperatively directed to be a standing order, it does not appear to have been very strictly obeyed ; for it is certain that when John Shore went out to India soon afterwards, he lodged, not in the fort, but in the town of Calcutta.

The measures which were taken to check illicit gains appear to have compelled some of the servants of the Company to draw bills on their friends at home. When news of this reached the Directors, they were greatly distressed, for they suspected that such as had not these resources were getting into debt to their native Banyans, and thus rendering themselves “liable to be tempted to infidelity in the offices they were trusted with.” But instead of deducing from these things the inference that their servants should have better pay, they still clung to the old idea of the excessive extravagance of the writers, and again strenuously insisted on the necessity of sumptuary regulations. It was imperatively enjoined that no writer should keep a palanquin unless “absolutely necessary for the preservation of health ;” that no writer should keep “more than one servant besides a cook ;” that no writer should be permitted to keep a horse without the express permission of the Governor ; and that no writer should be permitted, either by himself or jointly with others, to keep a country-house. “With respect to table liquors,” they added, “we cannot pretend to form regulations for

them," nor "with respect to general extravagance in dress," 1700—1800. of which sad accounts had reached home; but the Governor was to keep a watchful eye upon them, and to see that they conformed to that system of economy which had been so often prescribed.*

Lord Clive's cleansing mission to India did much to put an end to the reign of the adventurers, who had no connexion with the graduated service of the Company. Ever since the conquest of Bengal the cupidity of England had been excited, and men of all kinds had gone forth with letters of introduction in their pockets, and perhaps a clue to some desperate job, by which they might enrich themselves in a year or two, and return to England as nabobs of the real mushroom type.†

* These sumptuary regulations were always a chronic source of amusement to the Company's servants, who evaded them, and sometimes with a good deal of humour in the manner of evasion. For example, at Madras, where the restrictions appear to have been greater than at Calcutta, an order had gone forth against the use of umbrellas as protections against the sun. These sun-shades, principally made of broad leaves or split bamboos, were called roundels, from their shape. These being prohibited by name, the young writers had their umbrellas made square, and set forth that, although they knew that roundels were prohibited, there was nothing in orders against squaredels. On another occasion, a regulation having gone forth against the use of gold lace on the coats of the writers, a young civilian, when brought up for infringing the law, and asked if he did not know the regulation, said that he was aware of an order against gold lace, but he did not think that it was *binding*!

† The following anecdote, very illustrative of the history of the adventurers of those days, was related by Macaulay, in his speech on the second reading of the India Bill of 1853. "These were the sort of men," he said, "who took no office, but simply put the Governor-General to a species of ransom. They laid upon him a sort of tax—what the Mahrattas call chout, and the Scotch black-mail; that is, the sum paid to a thief in consideration that he went away without doing harm. There was a tradition in Calcutta, where the story was

very circumstantially told and generally believed, that a man came out with a strong letter of recommendation from one of the Ministers during Lord Clive's second administration. Lord Clive saw that he was not only unfit for, but would positively do harm in, any office, and said in his peculiar way, 'Well, chap, how much do you want?' Not being accustomed to be spoken to so plainly, the man replied, that he only hoped for some situation in which his services might be useful. 'That is no answer, chap,' said Lord Clive, 'how much do you want? Will one hundred thousand pounds do?' The person replied, that he should be delighted if by laborious service he could obtain that competence. Lord Clive then wrote out an order for the sum at once, and told the applicant to leave India by the ship he came in, and, once in England again, to remain there. I think the story is very probable, and I also think that the people of India ought to be grateful for the course Lord Clive pursued, for though he pillaged the people of Bengal to give this lucky adventurer a large sum, yet the man himself, if he had received an appointment, might both have pillaged them and misgoverned them as well." I have taken this passage, *verbatim*, from Hansard, but I believe that the sum named should have been, not a hundred thousand pounds, but ten thousand pounds. My own recollection of the speech—and sitting under the gallery I heard it most distinctly—is, that Macaulay used the words, "a lakh of rupees."

1700—1800. These interlopers were in the way of the regular service, whom they deprived of some of the best pickings which the country afforded. A letter from a Minister in England, or from an influential member of the Court of Directors, often stood in lieu of all covenants and indentures. But, as a body, the latter were convinced that these irregular appointments were injurious to their interests ; and in 1773, having expressed their satisfaction that their settlement in Bengal had been “put into a train of reform,” wrote out that the next thing to be done was “to revert to the old system, when the business of your Presidency was principally performed by our own servants, who then had knowledge of our investments, and every other department of our concerns. You will, therefore, fill the several offices with the writers and factors on your establishment.” And from that time the Company’s own servants had it pretty well to themselves.

But a far more powerful body of men than the Court of Directors of the East India Company were now seriously considering the character and conduct of the Company’s servants. The Houses of Parliament, instructed by the King’s Ministers, had begun to take heed of the dark histories on which then a new light had been thrown, and among other great reforms instituted by them they prohibited all further acceptance by the Company’s or other servants of presents from the Princes or other inhabitants of India. The famous Act of 1773 declared “that, from and after the first day of August, 1774, no person holding or exercising any civil or military office under the Crown or the Company in the East Indies shall accept, receive, or take, directly or indirectly, by himself or any other person or persons on his behalf, or for his use or benefit, of and from any of the Indian Princes or powers, or their ministers or agents (or any of the natives of Asia), any present, gift, donation, gratuity, or reward.” On conviction of any infraction of this law, the offender was to forfeit double the value of the present, and to be amenable to deportation from the country.*

* In 1784 these penalties were increased; but the Act of 1793 made the demanding or receiving presents of any kind, even for the use of the Company, a misdemeanor. In 1833 this was again modified, and the offence limited to the receipt of presents “for his own use.”

And so the matter stands at this time. Large quantities of presents are received from the native Princes and chiefs, but they are thrown into a common store and sold, and from their proceeds return-presents are purchased to be given to the donors.

The reforms introduced by Lord Clive, and the severe ^{1700—1800.} orders of the Court of Directors, now backed by Parliamentary enactments, reduced the primary advantages of the service to a very low state. Mr. Shore, who had then been for some years in India, wrote to England complaining that “the road to opulence grows daily narrower.” “The Court of Directors,” he added, “are actuated with such a spirit of reformation and retrenchment, and are so well seconded by Mr. Hastings, that it seems the rescission of all our remaining emoluments will alone suffice it. The Company’s service is, in fact, an employ not rendered very desirable. Patience, perseverance, and hope are all I have left.” His pay as a writer, he tell us, was, when he first entered the service, eight rupees, or less than a pound, a month—a statement which I do not know how to reconcile with the Court’s orders, quoted previously, fixing the allowance of a writer at 40*l.* a year. That the young civilians of that period, however, underwent considerable hardship, may be learned both from Mr. Shore’s Memoirs and from those of Mr. Forbes, who served the Company in Western India. Most readers are familiar with the statement of the latter gentleman, that he was often compelled to go to bed before nightfall, because he could not afford the expense of a candle.

If we are to believe Captain Joseph Price, who, about the year 1780, wrote certain pamphlets on Indian affairs, to which I have already alluded, the young civilians of that period were, on the whole, very well conducted. “There are, no doubt,” he says, “vices in some constitutions which no climate can control, and a warm one the least of any. On this I shall say nothing more than that, in all societies, some few individuals will run riot. Time, and time only, is able to rein in some of our natural passions. But as for the accidental ones of wine and gaming, if they are enjoyed anywhere in moderation, and without gross abuse, it is in the East Indies; for I never knew a young man guilty of either who did well in the Company’s service, for they are by no means countenanced in such excesses by men in power.” The logic of this must be admitted to halt a little; but, at all events, it shows that during the government of Warren Hastings excesses of this kind were discouraged by the higher servants of

1700—1800. the Company. In the next paragraph, however, Captain Price goes beyond this, for he asserts that the young civilians were much less profligate than youths of the same standing at home. “The study of the country languages,” he says, “and the daily duties of the office to which they are, from their first arrival, allotted, find employment enough for the most active mind; and in Asia, as in all other parts of the world, the man who best attends to the duties of his station and situation succeeds best in life. But as to dissipation, and corruption of manners and morals, a merchant’s or banker’s clerk of twenty years old in London is further gone than the Company’s servants in Asia during their whole life.” It is right to add that this statement, though of questionable accuracy, is confirmed by another writer, Mr. Robert Lindsay, of the Company’s service, who tells us that idleness rather than extravagance was the besetting sin of the civilians at that time. “It was not then the fashion,” says this writer, “to fatigue ourselves with hard labour; there were abundance of native scribes in all the offices to do the drudgery, and our taskmasters were not strict. Under these circumstances, it was not a matter of surprise if many of us were more idle than otherwise. I followed the tide, and a merrier set could not be found. There was fortunately little or no dissipation amongst us.” Elsewhere, Mr. Lindsay says that “the public business was transacted by a few able individuals, and the younger servants had full leisure to amuse themselves.”*

And they had not only leisure to amuse themselves, it would appear, but they had still leisure, and were allowed, to enter into commercial speculations on their own account. Mr. Lindsay had large dealings in salt, taking in a native capitalist as his partner, “provided I would appear as the ostensible person.” By one fortunate speculation, or, as he calls it, “well-timed energy,” he was enabled to pay off all the debts he had contracted during a long residence in Calcutta, and “to put a few thousand rupees in his pocket.” Encouraged by this venture, he launched, whilst a revenue collector in the

* A very good idea of the state of civilianism in India, during the administration of Warren Hastings, may be derived from these autobiographical notes of the Hon. Robert Lindsay, which are given in the third volume of that very entertaining work, the “Lives of the Lindsays.”

Dacca district, "into various speculations in trade." His pay was only 500*l.* a year, so he "contemplated with delight the wide field of commercial speculation opening before him."^{*} And he soon afterwards naively informs us, that from the "conspicuous advantage he derived from the great command of money to carry on his commercial pursuits," he dates the origin of the fortune he acquired in the Company's service.[†]

In this we see fairly reflected the state of the Company's Civil Service before the time of Cornwallis's arrival in India. The Honourable Robert Lindsay may be taken as a good type of his order. He was an honourable, well-meaning man, wise after his kind, and he only did what was sanctioned by universal usage. For a civil servant of the Company, at that time, was a hybrid monster; half a public functionary and half a private trader. If he had attempted to live on his official salary, he must have starved, or been eaten alive by rats and mosquitos. Thus cast upon their own resources, the better men traded with their employers' money; the worse grew rich by the more rapid process of peculation and corruption. The India Bill of 1784 prohibited private trade on the part of the Company's servants;[‡] but they evaded the act by putting forward some native underling or other person as the ostensible trader. All this was to be deplored. But it was clearly impossible to create a pure public service in India, without paying the servants in proportion to the risks which they incurred, and the inconveniences to which they were subjected. To Lord Cornwallis this was so apparent that he could not wonder at the "relaxed habits" of the agents of Government, and could scarcely condemn what had its root deep down in an evil system for which they were not responsible. There was but one remedy for the evil, and that he

1786.
Reform of the
Civil Service.

* Among other speculations in which he engaged was ship-building; but this does not appear to have been very successful. His mother wrote out very pleasantly that she had no doubt he was a very scientific ship-builder, but that she had one request to make of him, which was that he would not come to England in a ship of his own making.

† This sketch of the rise and progress

of the Indian Civil Service is printed, with certain alterations, from some papers which I contributed, in 1861, to *Blackwood's Magazine*. The information was derived from old India House records

‡ They were forbidden to "have any dealings or transactions, by way of traffic or trade, at any place within any of the provinces in India."

1786—87

determined at once to apply. He was convinced that it would be a wise economy in the end to place within the reach of the Company's servants such lawful and recognised gains as would enable them to disregard the temptations and opportunities which surrounded them. So he decreed that they should receive high official salaries, and should be wholly cut off from personal trade. "I am sorry to say," he wrote to Mr. Dundas at the Board of Control, "that I have every reason to believe that at present almost all the collectors are, under the name of some relation or friend, deeply engaged in commerce, and by their influence as judges and collectors of Adulut, they become the most dangerous enemies to the Company's interests and the greatest oppressors of the manufacturers. I hope you will approve of the additional allowances and the commission that we have given to the collectors, for without them it was absolutely impossible that an honest man should acquire the most moderate competency."* And at a later period he wrote to the same correspondent, with reference to the Company's civil servants, "There are some as honourable men as ever lived. They have committed no fault but that of submitting to the extortion of their superiors. They have no other means of getting their bread. . . . I sincerely believe that, excepting Mr. Charles Grant, there is not one person in the list who would escape prosecution."

To the earnest recommendations of the Governor-General—recommendations which, indeed, he had practically anticipated—the Court of Directors gave their assent, but it was a grudging one. They had great notions of economy; but their economy was based upon the extravagant principle of "penny-wise, pound-foolish." They were slow to comprehend the truth, that of all things in the world that which is best

* In another letter (addressed to the Court of Directors) he said "When you consider the situations of your servants in this country, the very high responsibility now more particularly annexed to the office of collector, the temptations of the situation, the incessant labour of his office, and the zeal which must be exerted to promote the prosperity of the revenues and country at large; when, on the other hand, you advert to the solemn restrictions imposed upon him by the Legislature, as well as those in the public regulations and the separate orders already noticed, abso-

lutely precluding him from any emolument whatever, excepting such as are publicly allowed, and when you are further pleased to consider that, excepting instances of extraordinary merit, your servants cannot in future expect to obtain the office of a collector under a period of twelve years spent in your service, we trust that we shall be found to have consulted your true interests with every compatible attention to economy, and that you will approve the allowances and commission fixed by us for your servants in the Revenue Department."

1786—87.

worth paying for is good service, and that even in its narrowest financial aspect it is wise and prudent for the State to consider the prosperity of those upon whom its own prosperity depends. So convinced was Cornwallis of this, that he wrote to Dundas, that the Company might advantageously save the salary of the Governor-General if they would not give better pay to their inferior servants, for that under the old system it would be easy to find a man to take his place for nothing. “ If the essence of the spirit of economy,” he said, “ of the whole Court of Directors could be collected, I am sure it would fall very short of my earnest anxiety on that subject. But I never can or shall think that it is good economy to put men into places of the greatest confidence, where they have it in their power to make their fortune in a few months, without giving them any salaries. If it is a maxim that no Government can command honest services, and that pay our servants as we please they will equally cheat, the sooner that we leave this country the better. I am sure that, under that supposition, I can be of no use, and my salary is so much thrown away : nothing will be so easy as to find a Governor-General of Bengal who will serve without salary.”*

In another letter, written at a later period, he said : “ I have been a most rigid economist in all cases where I thought rigid economy was true economy. I abolished sinecure places, put a stop to jobbing, agencies, and contracts, prevented large sums being voted away in Council for trumped-up charges, and have been unwearied in hunting out fraud and abuse in every department. As a proof that I have succeeded, you will see this year, what never happened before, that our expenses have fallen short of our estimates. But I shall never think it a wise measure in this country to place men in great and responsible situations, where the prosperity of our affairs must depend upon their exertions as well as their integrity, without giving them the means, in a certain number of years, of acquiring honestly and openly a moderate fortune.”

But, do what he might in India, it was difficult to restrain the tide of attempted jobbery, which was continually pouring in from England. From all the high places at home—from the King’s Court, from the council-chamber of the King’s Ministers, from the Houses of Parliament, from the lobbies of

English job-
bery.

* Cornwallis Correspondence. Ross.

1786—87. the India House—solicitations on behalf of all sorts of people kept streaming into Calcutta. Men and women of rank and influence in London had been so long accustomed to get rid of troublesome petitioners for place and patronage by sending them out to India with a letter of recommendation in their pockets, and the plan on many occasions had been found so successful, that the evil habit was not to be readily abandoned. To Cornwallis, who would not perpetrate a job to please the King himself, and who could with difficulty find honourable employment for these adventurers from England, all this was very distressing. His correspondence bears the impression of the vexation which it occasioned him. “Lord Ailesbury (Queen’s Chamberlain),” he wrote to his friend Lord Sydney, “has greatly distressed me by sending out a Mr. Ritso, recommended by the Queen; but I have too much at stake. I cannot desert the only system that can save this country even for sacred Majesty.” And again: “I told you how Lord Ailesbury had distressed me by sending out Mr. Ritso. He is now writing in the Secretary’s Office for two hundred or two hundred and fifty rupees a month, and I do not see the probability of my being able to give him anything better, without deserving to be impeached. I am still persecuted every day by people coming out with letters to me, who either get into jail or starve in the foreign settlements. For God’s sake do all in your power to stop this madness.” He was a very kind-hearted man, but the state of things was so bad, and it was so necessary to arrest it, that he wrote to the men himself who came begging to him for a place, after this formula: “If I was inclined to serve you, it is wholly out of my power to do it, without a breach of my duty. I most earnestly advise you to think of returning to England as soon as possible. After the 1st of January next, I shall be under the necessity of sending you thither.” If anything in the world could have arrested the evil, this would have done it. The remedy was severe, but it was effectual.

The Company, I am afraid, were not much better than the Court. The Directors were not disinclined to perpetrate little private jobs of their own. But to applications from Leaden-hall-street the Governor-General sent back only threats of resignation. “I must beg leave,” he wrote to a member of the Direction. “to observe that I do not conceive any man

1786-87.

can have behaved with more proper respect to the Court of Directors than I have done ever since I have held my present station ; but I must freely acknowledge that before I accepted the arduous task of governing this country, I did understand that the practice of naming persons from England to succeed to offices of great trust and importance to the public welfare in this country, without either knowing or regarding whether such persons were in any degree qualified for such offices, was entirely done away. If, unfortunately, so pernicious a system should be again revived, I should feel myself obliged to request that some other person might immediately take from me the responsibility of governing these extensive dominions, that I might preserve my own character, and not be a witness to the ruin of the interests of my country.”* So the Company’s protégés were sent away as empty-handed as those who came from the King and Queen.

A consistent perseverance in a course of this kind, though at the outset it may alarm and irritate, will in the end secure general respect and admiration, and extract unwilling tributes

* It does not appear either that the activity of Party Politics in the direction of rank jobbery was less notorious than that of the Court or the Company. Perhaps the rankest jobs ever attempted, and in some measure perpetrated, were those by which Mr. Edmund Burke’s brother William was to enrich himself. It was said, and not without some show of probability, that Warren Hastings’s neglect of William Burke added much to the rancour, if it did not originate the enmity, of his assailants. It appears that Lord Rawdon, who was a good deal behind the scenes, thought it advisable, in the interests of friendship, to give Cornwallis a hint of this. Nothing daunted, however, the Governor-General replied “I am much obliged to you for your friendly hint about William Burke. Although I may perhaps suffer a little in the opinion of the great personage to whom you allude, for my predilection for what I think great qualities and eminent services to his country in Mr. Pitt, I should on all other points most earnestly wish to give every proof of the most sincere attachment and anxious desire to do what I should have every reason to believe would be agreeable to him. I have, ever since I have been in India, treated William Burke

with the greatest personal attention, and I have done little favour, such as ensigncies in the King’s service, &c., to his friends. But it is impossible for me to serve him essentially—that is, put large sums of money into his pocket, without a gross violation of my public duty, and doing acts for which I should deserve to be impeached. He has himself suggested to me two modes of serving him, which I will explain to you. The first is, that he should receive money here, and be allowed to manage the remittances for the payment of the King’s troops at Madras and Bombay. I found him in possession of such a remittance to Madras when I first arrived, which was given to him by Macpherson (in order to pay his court to Edmund Burke), and fixed at the scandalous exchange of £10 Areot rupees for 100 pagodas, by what he, Macpherson, called a committee of respectable merchants, consisting of William Burke himself (the Company’s Military Paymaster-General), an intimate friend of Burke’s, and a principal proprietor in the bank through which he remitted his money, and poor —, who, I believe, to this day scarcely knows the difference of value between a rupee and a shilling.”

1786—87. of applause even from those whose immediate interests have been injuriously affected by it. The correspondence of Mr. Shore in the years 1786-87 indicates that the new Governor-General soon lived down the unpopularity which attended his first efforts to purify the administration. “I live upon the happiest terms with Lord Cornwallis,” wrote the Councillor in November, 1786. “I love and esteem his character, which is what the world allows it. The honesty of his principles is inflexible; he is manly, affable, and good natured; of an excellent judgment; and he has a degree of application to business beyond what you would suppose. I could not be happier with any man. His health is sound; for he has not had an hour’s indisposition since first I saw him. If the state of affairs would allow him to be popular, which he is most eminently at present, no Governor would ever enjoy a greater share of popularity. . . . Natives and Europeans universally exclaim that Lord Cornwallis’s arrival has saved the country.”

And again, writing a few months afterwards to Warren Hastings, he said: “The respect, esteem, and regard which I have for Lord Cornwallis might subject my opinion of his government to a suspicion of partiality. Yet I cannot avoid mentioning that it has acquired the character of vigour, consistency, and dignity. The system of patronage which you so justly reprobated, and which you always found so grievous a tax, has been entirely subverted. The members of Government, relieved from the torture of private solicitations, have more time to attend to their public duties; and the expenses of Government are kept within their established bounds. On these principles, I acknowledge it difficult to gratify my wishes with respect to my own friends, or those who, from recommendations, have claims upon me; and I cannot expect to escape reproaches for a conduct which the interest of the Company renders indispensable. With Lord Cornwallis I have had the happiness to live constantly on terms of the most intimate confidence, and on this account, as well as by a knowledge of his character, I am precluded from making any solicitations but such as are warranted by the strictest propriety. You will learn from others how well his time is regulated, and of his unremitting application to business. . . . His situation was uncomfortable on our arrival; he now re-

ceives the respect due to his zeal, integrity, and indefatigable application.”⁴ 1787

In August, 1787, Lord Cornwallis started on a tour in the ^{Tour in the} provinces—eager to see for himself the state of the country ^{Upper Provinces.} and the progress of the administration, and to inspect the troops under his command. Holding, as he did, the double office of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, and his natural tastes, no less than his antecedent experiences, inclining him towards military rather than civil affairs, he had from the first taken into his consideration the condition of the army, which was at that time not very encouraging. “I am now going up the river to visit the military stations,” he wrote to his friend Colonel Fox, with whom he had attended more than one review of the Prussian Army. “The Company’s Europeans are not exactly like what we saw two years ago. On the whole, everything goes on in this country as well as I could reasonably expect. I have made great and essential reforms, and, I think, without unpopularity. Bad as the evil was, I think the abuses of the army were the greatest, not one of which Sloper[†] had attempted to correct.” He wrote this on board his pinnace working up the river. It was a propitious season for clearing off arrears of private correspondence; and amongst others to whom he wrote, as the government party tracked up the Ganges, was his old friend Lord Shelburne, now Lord Lansdowne, to whom he said: “As I must lay my coming to India to your door, and

⁴ *Life of Lord Tignmouth, by his Son.*—In another letter, written in 1789, the same writer said: “The task upon which Lord Cornwallis and myself embarked was reformation and improvement. We had inveterate prejudices and long-confirmed habits to encounter. To serve our constituents, it was necessary to renounce the emoluments of individuals, and to introduce system and regularity where all before was disorder and misrule.”

[†] General Sloper had been sent out as Commander-in-Chief to Bengal before the appointment of Lord Cornwallis, and had been superseded by that nobleman. He had been tried in the balance, and found wanting. He had exhibited in his

conduct an almost unexampled aptitude for jobbery. On his supersession, he went home, and was received with open arms by the Prince of Wales. A contemporary journalist says: “The reception of General Sloper by the Prince of Wales was flattering to the General beyond conception. The Prince met him in Pall-Mall, as the General was going into London. He rode up, stopped the chaise himself, shook the General by the hand, and seemed overjoyed to see him; and in every place where they have met since his Royal Highness has paid him the most pointed and marked attention.” No one, after reading this, will be surprised to learn that Lord Cornwallis had the worst possible opinion of him.

1787.

as you are consequently in a great degree responsible for my conduct, I think it fair to tell you that I flatter myself I have not yet disgraced you. I can safely say that I have not been idle ; I have selected the ablest and honestest men in the different departments for my advisers, and I am not conscious that I have in any one instance sacrificed the public good to any private consideration. . . . I have already told you that I had patronised Fombelle ; I have likewise brought forward the two Kenneways, who are both very deserving men ; the soldier is my aide-de-camp, the other I have put into the Board of Trade, where he is rendering most essential services. . . . I am now going to visit the Upper Provinces and the stations of the army, which is, I am sorry to say, still in a most wretched condition, almost, indeed, without subordination.”

In those days travelling in India was slow and tedious. The river was full after the rains, and everything was in his favour ; but it was held to be a great achievement that he reached Benares on the 29th of August, “in the course of a month from the day on which he left the Presidency”†—a distance now accomplished in twenty-four hours. In the middle of the following month he was at Allahabad. He visited Futtehgurl, Cawnpore, and other principal stations, where he inspected the troops in cantonments, and formed an opinion not very favourable to any part of the Company’s establishment, except the Artillery. But if the Commander-in-Chief was active at this time, the Governor-General was thoughtful. For as he proceeded up the country, vague rumours of hostile designs on the part of the great Mahomedan usurper of Mysore came to him from Southern India. They greatly

* “Lord Cornwallis is gone up the country to review the military stations, and has left Stuart and myself to go on with the business . . . What I feel most is the distress of numbers with whom I am connected. The former extravagance of the service has produced this consequence . . . The principles upon which we act will make me more enemies than friends, but how can I help it? There is no serving God and Mammon”—*John Shore to H. I. Chandler, August 3, 1787. Life of Lord Teignmouth, by his Son.*

† “By the last accounts received from some of the Right Honourable the Governor-General’s suite, we have the pleasure to announce his Lordship’s arrival at Benares on the 29th ultimo His Lordship has had a very favourable passage, as, including the several days he has stopped at different settlements, he will have got to Benares in the course of a month from the day he left the Presidency.”—*Calcutta Gazette, Sept. 6, 1787.*

1787.

disquieted him. He was a soldier, right soldierly ; but he had lived so much in the camp, he had seen so much of the stern realities of actual warfare, that his desires were all for peace. Experience has since shown that the soldier-statesmen of India have ever been more moderate in counsel, and more forbearing in act, than her civil rulers. Lord Cornwallis saw clearly that there was a great work before him, which war would disastrously interrupt ; but, "equal to either fortune," he began to meditate hostile contingencies, and to turn his visit to the provinces to the best account. On the 5th of September, 1787, he wrote, from Chunar, to Mr. Stuart, senior member of his council : "I wish, with all my soul, that my apprehensions could be quiet respecting the Carnatic. Should the worst happen, and Tippoo actually break with us, I think it may prove ultimately fortunate that I am at present in this part of the country. I can take immediate measures to endeavour to form a close connexion with the different chiefs of the Mahrattas, and to incite them to attack Tippoo on their side to recover the territories that he and his father had wrested from them during their internal dissensions. Every other means must likewise be taken to carry on the war against him with the utmost vigour, and to provide against any foreign interference." On the 15th of October he wrote to Mr. Shore : "I lose no time in assuring you and Mr. Stuart that I most perfectly approve of your having resolved to support the declaration of the Madras Government, and of its being our determination to protect the Rajah of Travancore as one of our allies. If it will give you the smallest satisfaction, you may put my concurrence on record. . . . We must, no doubt, make every preparation in our power. . . . It is impossible to enter into particulars, until we are acquainted with the manner in which Tippoo means to carry his designs into execution." A month later, he wrote to Mr. Dundas in England, saying : "There appears such a jealousy and coldness in the disposition of the Mahrattas towards us, that I do not flatter myself, in the event of a breach with Tippoo, that we could derive any immediate assistance from them. The timidity of the Nizam, and the wretched state of his army and his country, do not render his intrigues with the French and Tippoo very formidable, and I think they

1787. may alarm the jealousy of the Poonah Ministry, and welcome them more readily to take part with us."

State of Oude. He was then sailing down the river, on his return journey to Calcutta. Among the other duties which he had imposed upon himself, was a visit to Oude, then, and for years afterwards, in a state of disorder, aggravated by the intense jobbery of English adventurers, sometimes with the stamp of the Company upon them, who entangled the unfortunate Newab-Wuzeer in half-fraudulent pecuniary transactions, and then endeavoured to obtain the aid of the sword of Government to cut the Gordian knot of the complications they had adroitly contrived for their own advantage. This was not the only evil. The connexion between the Company's Government and the Newab was one which was certain, in the end, to engulf him and his people in ruin. Lord Cornwallis brought a clear unbiased judgment to bear upon the past history of Oude; and he could not help sympathising with the distressed condition of the ruler of that fair province. "I was received at Allahabad," he wrote to the Court of Directors, "and attended to Lucknow by the Vizier and his Ministers with every mark of friendship and respect. I cannot, however, express how much I was concerned during my short residence at his capital, and my progress through his dominions, to be witness to the disordered state of his finances and government, and of the desolated appearance of the country. The evils were too alarming to admit of palliation, and I thought it my duty to exhort him in the most friendly manner to endeavour to apply effectual remedies to them." And then, after some further observations on the disorganisation of that unhappy province, he said, with the unflinching sincerity which distinguished all his utterances, "I shall avoid making any remarks upon the original grounds, or supposed right, which induced us to interfere in the details of that unfortunate country, and shall only say that I am afraid it has done us no credit in Hindostan; but that the imperfect manner in which we did or could interfere could hardly fail of being attended with the consequences that have been experienced—that of giving constant disgust and dissatisfaction to the Vizier, without producing a shadow of benefit or relief to the body of the inhabitants." He was the first, indeed, to hit that great glaring

1787.

blot, which afterwards was discerned for more than half a century, and was the source of all kinds of protests, remonstrances, and menaces, but which at last could be removed only by the sharp knife of annexation.

Early in December Lord Cornwallis was again in Calcutta. Return to Calcutta "I was so fortunate," he wrote to the Duke of York, on the 10th of that month, "in wind and weather, that I completed my expedition, during which, by land and water, I travelled above two-and-twenty hundred miles in less than four months, without omitting any material object of my tour, civil or military." He had brought back with him, from this tour of inspection, a very high estimate of the military qualities of the Company's Sepoys, but the worst possible opinion of their Europeans. "A brigade of our Sepoys," he said, "would easily make anybody Emperor of Hindostan." "The appearance of the native troops," he added, "gave me the greatest satisfaction; some of the battalions were perfectly well trained, and there was a spirit of emulation among the officers, and an attention in the men, which leaves me but little room to doubt that they will soon be brought to a great pitch of discipline . . . ; but the Company's Europeans are such miserable wretches that I am ashamed to acknowledge them for countrymen." To any one considering the manner in which the Company's regiments were recruited, there could be nothing surprising in this. The refuse of the streets was swept up and shovelled at once into the ships. Embarked as rabble, they were expected to land as soldiers. No experiment could be more hopeless. Yet it was clear to Lord Cornwallis that the permanence of our Indian Empire depended upon its defence by a fixed establishment of well-ordered European troops. "I think it must be universally admitted," he said, "that without a large and well-regulated body of Europeans, our hold of these valuable dominions must be very insecure. It cannot be expected that even the best of treatment would constantly conciliate the willing obedience of so vast a body of people, differing from ourselves in almost every circumstance of laws, religion, and customs; and oppressions of individuals, errors of government, and several other unforeseen causes, will, no doubt, arouse an inclination to revolt. On such occasions it would not be wise to place great dependence upon their

1787—88. countrymen who compose the native regiments, to secure their subjection.” He wrote this, in a strongly-worded letter, to the Court of Directors, telling them that it was absolutely necessary, for the correction of this evil, that a better system of recruiting in England should be established, and that the officers of the Company’s Europeans should be permitted to rank equally, according to the dates of their commissions, with those of his Majesty’s troops. He saw that the depressed state of the Company’s officers at that time was most injurious to the public interests, and that nothing could be more fatal to the general efficiency of the army than the “jealousies subsisting between the two services.” “I recommend,” he wrote to the Court, in another letter, “that they may be put, as nearly as possible, on a footing of equality in every respect, whenever they may happen to be employed together on the same service.”

Administrative reform. Whilst these recommendations were travelling to England, Lord Cornwallis, at the head-quarters of his government, was assiduously superintending the details of its internal administration. There was still much to be done in the way of what was called “the correction of abuses;” and in this he had a zealous and an active fellow-labourer in Mr. Shore. It was a happy circumstance that at this time all immediate apprehensions of a war with Tippoo had passed away with the old year. On the 7th of January, Cornwallis wrote to England, saying: “Our alarm from Tippoo’s preparations has ceased, and there is no reason to believe from General Conway’s* conduct that he has any desire to foment disturbances to promote a war in this country. . . . No man can be more seriously interested in the continuance of peace than myself; we have everything to lose and nothing to gain by war; and a peace for these next three years will enable me to put this country into such a state, that it will be a difficult task even for a bad successor to hurt it materially.” “If, however,” he wrote a few days afterwards, “the politics of Europe should embroil us with the French, I lay my account that Tippoo will be ready at the shortest notice to act in concert with them against the Carnatic.” It was therefore necessary to make

* General Conway, a French officer of Irish extraction, was then Governor of Pondicherry.

quiet preparations for the too probable contingency of war. 1788-89.
But there was abundant time for the business of administrative details, and in the years 1788-89 Lord Cornwallis assiduously applied himself to them, eager to reform altogether the revenue and judicial systems of the country. In this great work of amelioration he had, on all questions of land-tenure, the advice and assistance of Mr. Shore. In matters connected with the administration of justice, and generally with the law or regulations of the British settlements, he was guided primarily by the advice of Mr. George Barlow,* one of the Government secretaries, and one of the ablest and most promising members of the Company's Civil Service. Cornwallis had from the first discerned Barlow's great merits, and had placed unbounded confidence in him. With the exception, perhaps, of Mr. Charles Grant, whom to know was to honour, and Mr. Jonathan Duncan, who was rising into eminence as an administrator, mainly by the force of an overflowing humanity and an honesty and simplicity of character rarely surpassed, there was no man in the Company's service of whom Lord Cornwallis entertained a higher opinion than of George Barlow. And it may be added that, with the exception of the members of his own "family," or staff, there was no man for whom he felt a warmer affection. Barlow worked with all his might at the elaboration of a new Code of Regulations. And there was another man from whom, in legislative difficulties, the Governor-General was fain to apply for advice and assistance —a man whose name is very dear to literature and to learning, the accomplished Sir William Jones.

I do not purpose, at this point of the narrative, to write in detail of the administrative reforms which were instituted by the Government of Lord Cornwallis. It is enough to say that these two years were spent by him in hard, continuous work, not unenlivened by the exercise of those social amenities which are among the duties, as they are among the privileges, of the Chief of the Government of India. He had it very much at heart to improve the social morality of the English in India; for though very much better than it had been some years before, it was, notwithstanding the assertions of Captain

* Afterwards Sir George Hilaro Barlow, Governor-General *ad interim*, and subsequently Governor of Madras.

1787—89. Price and Mr. Lindsay, considerably in want of reform. The narrow limits of his residence, as I have before observed, compelled him to entertain the society of Calcutta in one of its public buildings. The newspapers of the day contain frequent notices of Lord Cornwallis's banquets and balls.* It may be gathered from a variety of cotemporary sources, that, though greatly respected as one who had the true nobleman stamp upon him, he was very popular in the settlement. For he was one who ever maintained the dignity of his station, without personal arrogance or exclusiveness; and who rendered his own good example more potential for good by the kindly consideration with which he treated his inferiors. The kindness of his heart and the courtesy of his manners compelled his countrymen to regard him with equal affection and respect.

And year after year—it might not untruthfully be said, month after month—a progressive improvement was observable in the morality of English residents in Bengal, which was soon communicated to the other presidencies. One characteristic illustration of this is worthy of notice. At the Calcutta balls, before the coming of Lord Cornwallis, there had seldom been much, if any, dancing after supper. The gentlemen-dancers were commonly too far gone in drink to venture upon any experiments of activity demanding the preservation of the perpendicular. But, when Lord Cornwallis set his mark on Anglo-Indian society, all this was changed. The Indian journals remarked that many "young bloods," who had before remained at the supper-table, returned to the dancing-room, and the ladies had all proper respect. At the same time there was a manifest diminution

* Take the following (from a Calcutta newspaper), drawn from Mr. Seton Carr's volume, as an example of Cornwallis's hospitality. "A very large and respectable company, in consequence of the invitation given by the Right Honourable the Governor-General, assembled on Tuesday (New Year's Day) at the Old Court House, where an elegant dinner was prepared. The toasts were, as usual, echoed from the cannon's mouth, and merited this distinction from their loyalty and patriotism. In the evening the ball exhibited a circle less extensive, but equally brilliant and beautiful, with

that which graced the entertainment in honour of the King's birthday. Lady Chambers and Colonel Pearce danced the first minuet, and the succeeding ones continued till about half-after eleven o'clock, when the supper-tables presented every requisite to gratify the most refined epicurean. The ladies soon resumed the pleasures of the dance, and knit the rural braid, in emulation of the poet's sister graces, till four in the morning, while some disciples of the jolly god of wine testified their satisfaction in strains of exultation"—*January, 1788.*

1789

of gambling; and as necessary results of less drink and less play, duelling and suicide ceased to furnish the ghastly incidents of the preceding years.*

The personal habits of Lord Cornwallis were at all times very simple. He was not at all addicted to official display, and perhaps on the whole, in his daily life, fell somewhat short of the outer stateliness which should environ the position of a Governor-General. He was fond of horse-exercise, and he had a partiality for high-trotting horses, perhaps because he was sensible that it would profit him to check his natural tendency to obesity. His companion in these rides was commonly his dear friend and cherished associate, Colonel Ross, whose society was a continual solace to him. Between the morning and the evening rides he worked hard. He told his son that it was all clockwork. "My life at Calcutta," he wrote, in January, 1789, to Lord Brome, "is perfect clockwork. I get on horseback just as the dawn of day begins to appear, ride on the same road and the same distance, pass the whole forenoon after my return from riding in doing business, and almost the same exactly before sunset, then write or read over letters or papers of business for two hours, sit down at nine, with two or three officers of my family, to some fruit and a biscuit, and go to bed soon after the clock strikes *ten*. I don't think the greatest sap at Eton can lead a duller life than this."

But the dulness was not to continue much longer. Already Prospects of war. were there ominous mutterings of a coming storm. The peace which had been so long threatened was now about to be broken by the unscrupulous conduct of Tippoo Sultan of Mysore, who was eager to swallow up the territories of our faithful ally, the Rajah of the Travancore. This was not to be borne. There was no difference of opinion in the council-

* An English clergyman named Tennant, who wrote a book about India under the title of "Indian Recreations," speaking of the improvements in the social morality of the English in India at the end of the last century, says: "A reformation, highly commendable, has been effected, partly from necessity, but more by the example of a late Governor-General, whose elevated rank and noble birth gave him in a great measure the guidance of fashion Re-

gular hours and sobriety of conduct became as decidedly the test of a man of fashion as they were formerly of irregularity." (The writer means to say "as irregularly formerly was.") "Thousands owe their lives, and many more their health, to this change, which had neither been reckoned on, nor even foreseen, by those who introduced it" I have not the least doubt, however, that Lord Cornwallis clearly foresaw it.

1789. chamber of Calcutta. The honour and the safety of the British empire in India alike demanded that we should resort to arms. But, unfortunately, there was at that time a very feeble state of government at Madras. Mr. Holland, though continually warned that war was not merely probable, but inevitable, had done nothing to prepare for it. Lord Cornwallis knew that in such an emergency he was not to be trusted, so he determined to proceed to Madras, and take charge of the civil government and the command of the army. But, before he was able to execute this design, he received intelligence that his friend General Medows had been appointed Governor and Commander-in-Chief at Madras. The tidings were received by Lord Cornwallis with mingled emotions of gratification and regret. He rejoiced that his old friend Medows was coming to the Coast, but he could not help being sorry that there was no longer a laudable pretext for taking personal command of the army which was about to march into Mysore. His sentiments have been so clearly recorded in an official minute which he wrote on receiving intelligence of the appointment of General Medows, that I cannot do better than transcribe his words. After speaking of the deplorable state of the Madras Government, he proceeded to say : "Under the impressions which I have described, I thought myself called upon by a sense of duty to the Company, as well as by an attention to the general interests of my country, to stand forth and endeavour to avert the misfortunes with which negligence and misconduct, or jealousies between the civil and military departments, might be attended. With that view, and upon the ground of state necessity, it was my intention to take the responsibility of an irregular measure upon myself, and to propose that the Board should invest me with full powers to take a temporary charge of the civil and military affairs at the Presidency of Fort St. George, by exercising the functions of Governor as well as those of Commander-in-chief. * * * * * It is, however, with great satisfaction that I congratulate the Board on the arrival, in the mean time, of the advices by the *Vestal* frigate, by which we have been informed that the commission appointing General Medows to be Governor of Fort St. George was on board that vessel, and as the *Vestal* proceeded from

1790.

Agengo to Bombay on the 3rd ultimo, there is every reason to hope that he will be able to take charge of the Government before, or at least as soon as, it would have been possible for me to have reached Madras. The grounds upon which I formed my first resolution are, therefore, in a great measure or entirely done away. For, as it would have been incompatible with the station which I hold in this country to have rendered myself in any way subordinate to the Government of Madras, and as General Medows is a man of acknowledged ability and character, and regularly invested by the Court of Directors with the offices of Governor and Commander-in-Chief at the Presidency of Fort St. George, I will not venture to say that, by relinquishing the immediate direction of the supreme government after a knowledge of the appointment of General Medows, I should not be justly exposed to blame and censure for executing a determination which had been made a few days before under the belief of the existence of different circumstances."

In a private letter to his brother, the Bishop of Lichfield, the Governor-General expressed clearly the sentiments with which he regarded the concession to General Medows of the command of the army in the field. "I wish," he wrote, "it (the news of Medows's transfer to Madras) had arrived either three months sooner or three months later; in the first case, I believe that we should have had no war, for I am convinced that Tippoo was encouraged by the weakness and corruption of Mr. Holland's government; and in the second, without any disparagement to Medows, whose character and abilities I highly respect, I think I could, for a time, have conducted the civil and military business of the Carnatic with more ease and advantage than he could, from the greater experience I have had in the general affairs of India. I must now be satisfied with being Medows's commissary, to furnish him with men, money, and stores; to get no share of credit, if things go well, and a large proportion of blame, if they do not succeed. All this I felt severely, but I could not think it justifiable to leave my own government in order to supersede such a man as Medows." And then, after speaking of his own private affairs, he gave utterance to the very natural lament of the successful administrator, who sees all the great structure of

1790. his financial reforms swept away by a sudden tempest : "It is a melancholy task to write all this, and to see all the effects of my economy and the regulation of the finances, which cost me so much labour, destroyed in a few months. But I am pretty well inured to the crosses and vexations of this world, and so long as my conscience does not reproach me with any blame, I have fortitude enough to bear up against them."*

General
Medows

I must pause here to devote a few sentences to the brave and noble-hearted man to whom Cornwallis was now prepared to delegate the command of the army of Mysore. He was one of the most chivalrous of soldiers, and the most generous and gentle of men. He had served with distinction in the American war, and had built up a character in the eyes of his comrades, in which a masculine courage, almost reckless in its hardihood, was not less conspicuous than a womanly kindness of heart and tenderness of manner. He was so much beloved by the soldiery, that there was not a man who, having once served under him, would not have followed him delightedly all over the world. When he was first ordered to America, having been appointed to a new regiment, he received permission to take as many men from his old corps as might volunteer to accompany him. Accordingly, he drew up the regiment in line, and, after a few words of explanation, stepped on one side, and exclaimed, "Let all, who choose to go with me, come on this side." The whole regiment to a man accepted the invitation ; the corps went over bodily to the spot on which their beloved commander was standing—a proof of their attachment which affected so sensibly his warm heart that he burst into tears.

On service, wherever danger was to be found, Medows was sure to be in the thick of it. In the battle of Brandywine, when leading on his grenadiers to the charge, with orders to reserve their fire, he received in the sword-arm, just above the elbow, a shot, which went out at his back ; and, falling from his horse, he broke his collar-bone on the other side. Major Harris† found him in this situation almost insensible ; but the well-known voice of his friend seemed to restore him ; he tried

* Cornwallis Correspondence—Ross.

† Afterwards General Lord Harris.

1790.

to extend a hand, but neither was at his command. "It's hard, Harris," he said; but presently added, "it's lucky poor Fanny (his wife) does not know this."

Another anecdote, still more characteristic, may be given in the words of Mr. Lushington, the biographer of Lord Harris: "The General (Meadows), acting upon that principle which continually influenced his military career, and which taught him that it made little difference in the chances of a soldier's life whether he did his duty cautiously and shabbily, or promptly and handsomely, exposed himself to the hottest fire wherever he could. On one occasion he persevered so heedlessly in doing so, that Colonel Harris and the other officers with him implored him to come down from the position where he stood as a mark to the enemy. He disregarded their remonstrance, when Colonel Harris jumped up and placed himself beside him, saying, 'If you, sir, think it right to remain here, it is my duty to stand by you.' This act of generous friendship had an immediate effect upon the noble heart of General Meadows, and he descended from his perilous station."

Nor was the humanity of the General less conspicuous than his gallantry and devotion. It was one of his favourite maxims —one which he never neglected an opportunity of enforcing upon the troops under his command—that "an enemy in our power is an enemy no more; and the glorious characteristic of a British soldier is to conquer and to spare." Even when opposed to the most barbarous and remorseless enemy against whom we have ever taken up arms, he still preached the doctrine of "no retaliation" to his followers. Contending with enemies of a different description, no man was more anxious to acknowledge their merits than General Meadows. At St. Lucie he issued an order, commencing with the following words: "As soon as our gallant and generous enemy (the French) are seen to advance in great numbers, the troops are to receive them with three huzzas, and then to be perfectly silent and obedient to their officers."*

* This was in 1778. Meadows commanded a brigade. An amusing account of the operations is given by the Honourable Colin Lindsay ("Lives of the Lindsays"), in which the reciprocation

of courtesies between the English and French officers is pleasantly represented. Following their example, an English soldier took a pinch of snuff from a French sentry, and got into trouble for it.

1790. In the course of the year 1788, General Medows, mainly on the recommendation of Lord Cornwallis, was appointed Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Bombay. Accompanied by Colonel Harris as his Secretary,* he sailed in the early part of the year for that presidency; but he had not long discharged the duties of his station when he was transferred in a similar capacity to Madras. This change had been in contemplation from the first, and indeed the King's Ministers had intended that he should eventually succeed to the Governor-Generalship—an arrangement which, it was felt, would be gratifying to Cornwallis.† But Medows, who was no courtier, and who scorned to purchase promotion by servility, contrived to give offence to the Directors in Leadenhall-street, and for some time it appeared to Lord Cornwallis that his friend had thrown away his chance of succession. In April, 1790, however, General Medows was formally appointed, on the recommendation of Mr. Pitt, to "succeed to the Govern-

* The circumstances of this appointment are worthy of record, especially in connexion with the history of the conquest of Mysore. Happening shortly after his appointment to meet Harris in St. James's-street, General Medows asked his old friend and comrade what he had been doing. Harris replied that he had been to the Army Agents to arrange the sale of his commission, and that he was about to make preparations to emigrate with his family to Canada, as he saw little chance of advancement in the service. The General heard the story with manifest vexation and impatience, and then asked his friend if the sale had been actually effected and the money paid? The reply was that there would be a day's delay, owing to the death of the Princess Amelia. "Then," said Medows, "you shall not sell out. I am going as Governor to Bombay, and you shall go with me as secretary and aide-de-camp I will stop the sale of the commission." He did so at once, and consummated his kindness by lending his friend a large sum of money to enable him to insure his life. And from this accidental meeting in St. James's-street came the gradation of circumstances and events which turned the despairing soldier into the conqueror of Mysore and the founder of an illustrious family.

† The following extract of a letter from Mr. Dundas to Lord Cornwallis, dated July 22, 1787, places this beyond a doubt "We are all agreed that military men are the best of all Governors for India, and our wish is to persuade General Medows to accept the Government of Bombay, with a commission of Commander-in-Chief of that settlement. He will remain till Campbell leaves Madras, and can be appointed to that settlement when Campbell leaves it; and there he can remain till you leave India, and be ready to succeed you when you choose (which I hope will be as late as you can) to leave it." What Cornwallis thought of the plan is equally clear "I should now be inclined to say," he wrote to Mr. Dundas, "you had better stick to your plan of military Governors, and have done with the civil line, if I did not remember there have been some military characters in this country that have not been very correct. I hope, however, at all events, that Medows will be my successor—not that I mean to run away whilst the house is on fire, for much as I wish to return to England next year, I would not do it unless the Company's possessions were in a state of security."

—*Cornwallis Correspondence. Ross. Feb. 7, 1790.*

ment-General of Bengal, upon the death, removal, or resignation of Earl Cornwallis.”^{*}

1790.

In the spring of 1790, as already stated, General Medows disembarked at Madras, and lost no time in placing himself at the head of his army. On the 25th of May the order-book contained his first characteristic address to the troops under his command, dated from Head-Quarters Camp, Trichinopoly Plain : “The Commander-in-Chief, Major-General Medows, is happy to find himself at the head of that army whose appearance adorns the country, he trusts their bravery and discipline will save. An army that is brave and obedient, that is patient of labour and fearless of danger, that surmounts difficulties, and is full of resources, but above all, whose cause is just, has reason to hope to be invincible against a cruel and ambitious tyrant, whose savage treatment of his prisoners but too many present have experienced. However, should the fortune of war put him in our hands, uncontaminated by his base example, let him be treated with every act of humanity and generosity, and enlightened, if possible, by a treatment so much the reverse of his own. To a generous mind, a fault acknowledged is a fault forgot ; and an enemy in our power is an enemy no more. That the army and Commander-in-Chief may understand each other—and the sooner the better, as there is nothing on earth that he idolises more than a well-disciplined army, so there is nothing on earth that he detests or despises more than the reverse—he is, therefore, determined to make the severest examples of the few that may dare to disgrace the army in general by a different conduct. No plunderers will be shown the smallest mercy ; he is resolved to make examples severe, in the hope of making them rare, and would think it one of the greatest blessings he could enjoy to make none at all. Among the first wishes of his heart is the army’s

* Pitt’s letter is dated April 28, 1790. He wrote to the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman, saying. “As you expressed a wish that I should communicate to you, in writing, my sentiments respecting the nominations for the Governments of Bengal and Madras, I think it right to state to you, that as far as I am enabled to form an opinion on that subject, I think no arrangement can be made under the present circumstances which will be

more for the public service than the appointment of General Medows to be Governor-General.” The Court’s resolution was passed on the same day. On the 28th April, 1790, Major-General William Medows was appointed by the Court of Directors “to succeed to the Government-General of Bengal, upon the death, removal, or resignation of Earl Cornwallis.”—*M.S. Records.*

1790

reputation and success ; but it must be prepared for hardships, and to endure them—for difficulties, and to surmount them—for numerous enemies, and to beat them.”

But the noble soldier is not always the accomplished General, and the high qualities which distinguished Medows were not those which command success in such operations as were now confided to him. He took the field under many disadvantages. His army was ill equipped ; the country and the mode of warfare were new to him. He was imperfectly acquainted with the resources of the enemy, and was too eager for action in detail to take a comprehensive view of the general demands of the campaign before him. He was blamed for dividing his forces in such a manner as to expose them to disaster by the impossibility of supporting them when engaged with superior bodies of the enemy ; and it is not to be doubted that the army was harassed and wearied without attaining any proportionate results.* Lord Cornwallis had from the first entertained some private misgivings as to the wisdom of his friend’s plan of operations ; but he had waited patiently for the fuller development of the scheme, and had passed no hasty judgment upon it. But month after month passed, and it was plain that Medows was making no way towards the subjugation of Tippoo, and, in spite of his eager wish for hard fighting, had failed to bring the Sultan to a general action. At last, the imminent danger to which the force under Colonel Floyd was exposed, in the half-glorious, half-disastrous affair of Sattemengulum, where the gallantry of our troops was far more conspicuous than their success, roused the Governor-General from his generous delusion that the conduct of the war was in good hands. Moreover, it required good and experienced management to keep our allies, the Nizam and the Peishwah, up to the mark of good faith and vigorous action under the depressing influences of an unsuccessful campaign. So, after much self-communing and some consultation with

* The following passage in Major Price’s narrative, drawn from his contemporary journal, is significant “On this subject I find it here rather boldly remarked for a subaltern of nine years’ standing, how much it derogated from the judgment of the Roman *Biu*tos, to whose vigorous example General Me-

dows had some time since referred, to have thus exposed his army to be cut off in detail by placing so valuable a division of it, in defiance of so many fatal examples, so far beyond the possibility of support It was, however, the general opinion at the time.”

1790.

his colleagues in the government, Lord Cornwallis determined to take command of the army in the field.

But he was very careful of the reputation of his friend, and with some—perhaps excusable—obscuration of the truth, recorded in his public despatches that he did not supersede General Medows on account of any distrust of his military skill.* “I entertain,” he wrote to the Court of Directors on the 17th of November, “too high an opinion of General Medows’s professional abilities, and feel too great a confidence in his zeal to promote the public good, to imagine that the war will be conducted with more success under my own immediate direction; but as Tippoo may have it in his power, during a temporary inactivity on our part, to turn his whole force against our allies, and, unless counteracted by us, may intimidate or otherwise prevail upon them to treat for a separate peace, I have thought it incumbent upon me, on this occasion, to step beyond the line of regular official duty, upon the supposition that my presence on the coast may operate in some degree to convince them of our being determined to persevere in a vigorous prosecution of the war, and by that means encourage them to resist the common enemy with firmness until the north-east monsoon shall break up, and we shall, in other respects, be prepared to act with efficacy in co-operation with them.” To Mr. Dundas he wrote about the same time, saying: “It is vain now to look back; we must only consider how to remedy the evil, and to prevent the ill effects which our delay may occasion in the minds of our allies. It immediately occurred to me that nothing would be so likely to keep up their spirits, and to convince them of our determination to act with vigour, as my taking the command of the army; I have accordingly declared my intention of embarking for Madras in the first week of next month.”

It was a fortunate circumstance that General Medows ever regarded Lord Cornwallis with the warmest feelings of admiration and esteem, and that, with all his eager desire for military glory, he did not receive with a sentiment of jealousy the

* In a letter to his brother, Lord Cornwallis says “Our war on the coast has hitherto not succeeded so well as we had a right to expect. Our army, the finest and best appointed that

ever took the field in India, is worn down with unprofitable fatigue, and much discontented with their leaders, and the conduct of both Medows and Musgrave highly reprobated”

1790. tidings of his supersession by the Governor-General. It is possible, indeed, that he may have seen in this new distribution of authority increased opportunities of personal distinction ; for he was one who, in these days, would covet a Victoria cross more than a peerage, and a wound received at the head of a storming party more than all the prize money in the world. By Lord Cornwallis himself the noble bearing of his friend was held in all due honour. “ I hope,” he wrote to Dundas, “ you will give Meadows full credit in England for his generous and noble conduct on the trying occasion of my superseding him in his command. I knew the excellency of his temper and of his heart, but he has really, in this instance, surpassed my expectations. It is, besides, but justice to him to observe that, owing to untoward accidents, the first intelligence he received of my coming was attended with the most mortifying circumstances ; for although I had, out of delicacy, kept my resolution a profound secret for three weeks after I had written my intentions to him, it unluckily happened, owing to the interruption of the posts, that he first heard of it from the Madras Board.”

Cornwallis at
Madras.

On the 12th of December, 1790, Lord Cornwallis arrived at Madras. He found, in the civil administration of that presidency greater abuses than he had discovered in Bengal. “ The whole system of this presidency,” he wrote, “ is founded on the good old principles of Leadenhall-street economy—small salaries and immense perquisites ; and if the Directors alone could be ruined by it, everybody would say they deserved it ; but unfortunately it is not the Court of Directors, but the British nation that must be the sufferers. We must, however,” he continued, “ put an end to the war before we can attempt any serious reform, and my thoughts for some months to come will be wholly occupied in endeavouring to reduce the overgrown power of Tippoo.”

1791. From Madras, on the 22nd of January, 1791, he wrote to Mr. Barlow, after some observations on the new scheme of civil administration : “ I have led a life of the greatest anxiety, in the first place from the disappointment in the arrival of our ships, and the total failure of the monsoon, which has not,

1791.

perhaps, occurred for the last forty years, and afterwards from the General's having brought too small a force from Arnee to ensure the safe conveyance of so great a train of artillery and provisions as we must take from hence. The latter is now set right, after its having caused me many sleepless nights, and we have now provided bullocks to enable us to march, even if none should arrive from Bengal. What fools are men, for wishing for power and command ; and how much greater a fool am I, for embarking in all these troubles and anxieties without wishing for either. Tippoo in person has gone either against the Mahrattas or Aberciomby ; but his numerous horse have committed, and still commit, the most shocking cruelties in the Carnatic. I shall march from hence on the 4th or 5th of next month for Bangalore and Scringapatam ; and everything is so arranged that I do not expect to meet with any great obstructions, either from the want of stores or provisions."

Before the end of the month Cornwallis met General Medows at Vellout, and assumed command of the army. On the 5th of February, they broke ground for Vellore. On the 12th he wrote from that place, saying that by the 5th or 6th of March he hoped to invest Bangalore. On the 23rd of February he wrote to his brother, saying that he had brought all his heavy artillery and stores over the mountains without accident. "Two or three months," he added, "must probably bring this war to a crisis, and I shall then be able to form some judgment about the time of my going home." There was small prospect at that time of such a consummation, for he had talked to Medows about the succession to the Governor-Generalship, and the General had shown no inclination to go to Bengal at the end of the war.

Cornwallis kept his word to the letter, and on the 5th of Fall of Bangalore he invested Bangalore. Two days afterwards the ^{lore.} Pettah, or town, was carried, to the astonishment of Tippoo, who had been entirely outmanœuvred by the English General ; and then preparations were commenced for the capture of the fort. The operations of the siege were continued until the 20th of March, when everything was ready for the assault.* There was a stout and gallant resistance ; but the steady gal-

* The best account with which I am acquainted of these operations, which belong rather to history than to biography, is to be found in a letter written by Sir

March 21,
1791.

antry of the English forces prevailed. Bangalore was taken by assault. Large numbers of the enemy were bayoneted in the works, and Tippoo, surprised and disheartened by the seizure of so valued a stronghold, withdrew the force with which he had hoped successfully to support the besieged, and fell back towards Seringapatam.

The advance on Seringapatam. A more cautious general than Lord Cornwallis—one less eager to do his work by bringing the enemy to action—would now, perhaps, have hesitated to attempt to bring the campaign to a close in the existing season. The line of country before him was far more extensive than that which he had already traversed, and his resources were far less. During the operations against Bangalore, he had lost a considerable part of his carriage cattle. Large numbers of his draft bullocks had been killed to supply his European troops with food, and a still greater number had died. But these formidable obstacles did not deter Cornwallis from advancing. He knew the chances and the cost of failure, but he balanced them against the immense advantages of success. At any moment a letter might have been brought into his tent announcing that France and England were again at war with each other—in which case the French in India would have given their best help to the Sultan of Mysore. So he determined, after forming a juncture with the Nizam's cavalry,* to push forward into the

Thomas Munro, when a young officer with the army. He says that Lord Cornwallis, "from his uniform steady conduct, deserved success; he never lost sight of his object to follow Tippoo; neither did he, in the different cannonades, ever permit a shot to be returned." "On the 17th, in the morning, Lord Cornwallis was visiting the batteries when, about eight o'clock, fifteen guns opened suddenly on the left wing. The nature of the country, which is full of hollow ways, had enabled Tippoo to advance unperceived, and the report of the guns was the first notice that General Meadows had of his being so near. The line formed without striking tents, and the troops sat on the ground whilst the enemy kept up a brisk cannonade, which, though distant, did a good deal of execution among the followers crowded together in the centre of the camp, between the two lines of infantry, and it also killed or wounded fifty or

sixty men in the ranks, which so far got the better of his Lordship's temper, that he determined to advance, and was giving directions to that effect when Tippoo drew off his army."—*Gleig's Life of Sir Thomas Munro.*

* I cannot help thinking that this was by far the greatest error which Cornwallis committed. He lost exactly a month by it, when time was everything to him, by going round to pick up a body of horse, whose co-operation was not likely to be of much use to us when already seen that they would distress us greatly by destroying our forage, as they would not venture beyond our outposts to collect it; and that they could have been of no use to us, as the whole of them would not face five hundred of the enemy's horse." This statement is amply confirmed by Lord Cornwallis's own correspondence.

1791.

very heart of Tippoo's dominions, to invest the capital, and to dictate terms of peace under the walls of Seringapatam. Before the middle of May, he was within ten miles of that city; but, although he was strong enough to beat the enemy fairly "in the open," he saw at once that he had not the means of carrying so formidable a place as that which now stood, in proud defiance, before him. On the 15th of May he was in some measure rewarded for all the toil and anxiety of his difficult march to the Mysore capital, by the occurrence of the long-coveted opportunity of drawing Tippoo into action in the field. He accomplished this, and aided by the Nizam's troops, who fought better than he had expected, he fairly beat and dispersed them. But he was not in a position to follow up the victory. The junction which he had expected to form with General Abercromby, the Bombay Commander, was not immediately practicable. The elements were hostile, and the material resources of the army were failing him. Bitter, indeed, was the mortification which overwhelmed him, when he found that just at what he had believed to be the point of victory, he was compelled to retire. But he had neither stores nor provisions for a long siege; and to have attempted, at the end of May, to carry the place with such insufficient means, would have been only to court a disastrous failure. So he determined to break up his siege train, and to fall back upon Bangalore.*

Then Lord Cornwallis began to experience, in all their bitterness, the horrors of a hot-weather campaign in India, with insufficient appliances for the maintenance and protection of his army. An epidemic disorder broke out among his cattle. Numbers fell by the way, and the remainder with difficulty struggled on with their burdens. Grain was so scarce, that the famished camp-followers were compelled to

Retirement of
the army.

* Munro thus describes the situation of Cornwallis's army "We had by this time lost the greatest part of our cattle, the guns had for the two last marches been brought forward with much difficulty by the assistance of the troops, and the battering-train had seldom got to its place before ten at night. The weather, too, which had been unfavourable ever since our leaving Bangalore, had now all the appearance of a

settled monsoon. The remaining bullocks, it was apprehended, would hardly be able to drag the field-pieces back to Bangalore, and we had only twelve days' rice at half-allowance. In this situation it became absolutely necessary, on the 22nd, to burst our heavy cannon, to bury the shot, to throw the powder into wells, and to destroy all the other besieging materials."—*Gley's Life of Sir Thomas Munro.*

1791. feed on the diseased carcases of the bullocks. The cavalry horses were reduced to such a state that they could not carry their riders, and many were shot as useless incumbrances. The officers, who had given up the greater part of their private carriage for public uses, suffered so severely, that in many cases they were compelled to ask for the rations which were served out to the privates. The tents were little better than tinder ; and the clothes of officers and men were reduced to mere rags. "The ground at Camiambuddy," wrote Major Dirom, the historian of the war, "where the army had encamped but six days, was covered in a circuit of several miles with the carcases of cattle and horses ; and the last of the gun-carriages, carts, and stores of the battering train, left in flames, was a melancholy spectacle which the troops passed, as they quitted the deadly camp."

It was not strange that, in such distressing circumstances, the spirits of the commander should begin to droop. There was a necessary suspension of operations, for the rains had set in ; and there is nothing so wearisome and enervating as the inactivity of camp-life in an unhealthy season of the year. His constitution, on the whole, bore up bravely ; but continued anxiety began to tell upon him. "My health," he wrote to his brother on the 13th of July, "has not suffered, although my spirits are almost worn out, and if I cannot soon overcome Tippoo, I think the plagues and mortifications of this most difficult war will overcome me." Six long, dreary weeks of waiting passed away ; and he still felt sad and sick at heart. "If Tippoo," he wrote to his son, on the 8th of September, "does not offer reasonable terms before that time, I hope to oblige him to do so by a successful attack on Seringapatam in November next ; but however favourable a turn our affairs may take, I cannot now expect, consistently with the duty I owe to my country, to leave India before January, 1793, and I trust that my evil stars cannot detain me longer than that period. I grow old and more rheumatic, and have lost all spirits, and shall only say when I return :

'A soldier, worn with cares and toils of war,
Is come to lay his weary bones among you.'

"You remember Wolsey's speech, but I shall have an

1791.

easier conscience than he, probably, had." And on the same day he wrote to his friend Mr. Grisdale, saying : " God knows when our war will end—I hope and trust it will end soon, or it will end me. I do not mean that I am sick. I have stood a burning sun and a cold wind as well as the youngest of them ; but I am plagued and tormented and wearied to death."

The time, however, had now come, for the commencement, Capture of Nundydroog. at least, of those minor operations which were necessary to secure the success of the grand march upon Seringapatam. Some forts were to be taken at no great distance from Bangalore, where the army was encamped ; stubborn, obstinate places, of immense natural strength, which the enemy believed to be impregnable. One of these places, known as Nundydroog, was to be carried at the end of September. The fortress was described as standing on a rocky mountain, 1700 feet in height, " three-fourths of its circumference being actually inaccessible." After some weeks, however, a practicable breach was made, and then General Medows, who had all this long weary time been panting for an opportunity of personal distinction, offered his services to command the detachment that was to proceed to the assault, and Lord Cornwallis accepted them. On the 18th of October everything was ready for the advance of the stormers. General Medows placed himself at the head of his men, and the word had been given to move forward upon the breach, when some one vociferated that there was a mine beneath it. " If there be a mine," cried Medows, " it is a mine of gold ;" and he called on his men to push forward. And amidst a continued hail of heavy stones from the impending precipice, more formidable than the fire of the guns, the storming party entered the breach ; and so a place which, in the hands of the Mahrattas, had defied Hyder Ali for three years, was wrested from his sons after a siege of a few weeks.

The cold weather, so eagerly looked for, came at last ; and the interval of repose, wearisome and dispiriting though it was, had been turned to the best possible account. The army, which was now about to take the field, was very different from the army with which, in the hot weather, Lord Cornwallis had retired from Seringapatam. Great prepara-

1791. tions had been made for the renewal of the war. Bengal had been drawn upon for artillery and carriage cattle—especially elephants. A large supply of specie had come from England. Success was now almost a certainty. The army was set in motion again, and, as it advanced, the spirits of Lord Cornwallis rapidly revived. There was something to be done before the great crowning work of the investment of the Mysore capital was to be accomplished. The great stronghold of Savindroog—more formidable, even, than that of Nundydroog—was to be carried by assault. As long as it remained in the enemy's hands our lines of communication could not be secured, and our convoys might, at any time, have been intercepted. Tippoo had laughed to scorn the idea of such a place being carried by human agency ; and the garrison, which he had posted in it, relied mainly on its natural strength. But the batteries which opened on the 17th of December had soon effected a practicable breach, and on the 22nd the place was carried by assault. Cornwallis was overjoyed at the result. “ I have been fortunate,” he wrote to his brother on the 29th, “ in taking, in a very few days, and with very little loss, the important fortress of Savindroog, the possession of which was absolutely necessary to enable us to maintain a secure communication with Bangalore when we advance to the attack of Seringapatam. The speedy reduction of this place, which has been considered all over India as impregnable, has struck great terror into the enemy's other garrisons ; for, in the three days subsequent to the assault of Savindroog, three other strong forts in its neighbourhood, each of them capable of making a good resistance, fell into our hands. By these successes we have now a frontier-line by which our supplies may with ease be brought forward within fifty miles of the enemy's capital. God send that we may soon see a happy termination of this war, of which I am most heartily tired.”

Capture of
Savindroog

1792. The new year found the army full of heart and hope, eager to advance. The arrangements of our Native allies, always tardily effected, were at last complete, and the armies of the Nizam and the Peishwah were ready to accompany us to the Mysore capital. On the 25th of January the junction with the Confederates had been formed, and everything was ready for a combined advance on the capital of Mysore. The army

marched, and on the 5th of February Seringapatam was again in sight. No painful doubts and anxieties now assailed the mind of the Commander. Confident of success, he was eager to do his work quickly; and whilst Tippoo was congratulating himself on the thought that time would be his best ally, Cornwallis was taking it by the forelock, and making his dispositions for an immediate attack on the enemy's camp. Seringapatam stands at one extremity of an oblong island formed by two branches of the Cauvery river. Between the northern bank of the river and a strong "bound hedge," Tippoo's army was posted, under the shelter of the guns of the fort and the batteries of the island. Once assured of their position, Cornwallis determined to dislodge them. His best hope lay in a prompt and vigorous movement at an unexpected time; so in the course of the 6th of February he made his arrangements for a night attack by a lightly-equipped body of Foot on the enemy's camp and the works which they were constructing. General Medows was to command the right, Colonel Maxwell the left, whilst Cornwallis himself took command of the centre division of the force.

To our Native allies this movement seemed to be nothing less than a spasm of madness. That a few regiments of Infantry, without guns, should be sent forward to attack the enemy in position in a fortified camp, under the shelter of their guns, and that the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief should go with the fighting party, as though he were a common soldier, were eccentricities of warfare unaccountable in their eyes save by the hypothesis of the insanity of the Lord-Sahib. But never in his life did Cornwallis go about his work more sanely—never with a cooler calculation of the chances, or a juster appreciation of the immense advantages, of success. He started in high spirits. It was a fine, still, moonlight night, and unencumbered as they were they moved forward rapidly and quietly, and soon came in front of Tippoo's astonished army. The story of that eventful night has often been told before. The left and the centre divisions were completely successful; but the right division, under General Medows, "by one of those accidents to which all operations in the night must be liable," failed to accomplish the work entrusted to it. Medows found himself

1792. before a well-defended redoubt, the assault of which was not a part of the intended plan of operations, and before he could carry it, and proceed to support the Commander-in-Chief, day had broken, and Lord Cornwallis had done his work.*

But although the English General had accomplished more than he had ventured to hope, and Tippoo, who had seen, first with incredulity and then with dismay, the long line of English Footmen advancing under the silence of the night into the very heart of his camp, had shut himself in his fort, the daylight did not bring with it any cessation of the strife. Our troops had effected a lodgment on the island of Seringapatam, and detachments there and on the other side of the river in rear of Tippoo's camp were now exposed to the attacks of the enemy, who in vain endeavoured to dislodge them. There was some hard fighting throughout the day, the result of which made it clear to the Sultan that the game must now be played out by him behind the walls of Seringapatam; so he withdrew his troops from all the outlying redoubts, and abandoned every part on the north side of the river. So that now, in the words of the military historian of the war, "the proud city of Seringapatam, which we could scarcely discern from our first ground, was now in forty-eight hours strongly and closely invested on its two principal sides; the enemy's army broken and dispirited; ours in perfect order, and highly animated by their success."

Preparations were now made for the commencement of the siege. But Tippoo had, by this time, measuring rightly the resources of the English, begun to think of the expediency of not risking conclusions with the formidable force which had just routed his best troops, and was now preparing to attack his stronghold. But one despairing effort might yet be made, if not by fair means, by foul, to cast confusion into the ranks of the enemy. In the eyes of an Oriental potentate, to destroy the leader of an expedition, is to destroy the expedition itself. If Lord Cornwallis, who, in his own person, represented the su-

* During a great part of the operations, Cornwallis was personally exposed to the fire of the enemy. He was wounded in the hand, but not severely. It is related that when Meadows joined him, he said, alluding to the mistake he

had made, "I, my Lord, not you, should have had that rap over the knuckles." The main brunt of the fighting must have fallen on the centre division, for it lost 342 men killed and wounded out of a total of 535.

1792.

preme military and civil power of the English, could be cut off by any base stratagem, it appeared to Tippoo a certainty that the army would retire, discomfited and despairing, from Seringapatam. He did not think that the foul act would have excited to deeds of still higher daring the irrepressible manhood of the English Army, and that Medows would certainly, in such a case, amply avenge the murder of his leader. So he sent a party of Mahomedan horsemen, drugged to the point of fury with *bang*, to make their way into the English camp, and cut the English leader to pieces in his own tent. A man of simple and unostentatious habits, and ever disinclined, for the sake of his own safety or comfort, to give trouble to others, the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief had always been content with a guard consisting of a couple of troopers of his own escort. If, then, Tippoo's horsemen, who, in such a heterogeneous assembly as that which was composed by the forces of the Confederates, might easily have escaped observation, had taken their measures with any calmness and collectedness, they might have accomplished their object. But they went about their work wildly, and they failed. A party of Bombay Sepoys turned out against them, and they fled in dismay from the English camp. After this, Lord Cornwallis was reluctantly persuaded to allow a party of English soldiers to mount guard over his tent.

Foiled in this desperate attempt upon the life of the English leader, Tippoo was eager to negotiate a peace. The negotiations extended over many weeks, and there was at least one man in camp who watched their progress with the deepest interest, hoping that the peace-efforts would break down utterly, and that orders would be issued for the commencement of the siege. This was General Medows, who knew that he would regain all the credit he had lost, and a large measure besides, whether living to bear his honours or dying in the breach. The accident which had befallen him had preyed tormentingly on his spirits. Seringapatam, however, was not yet taken. There was prospect of a siege, and General Medows sought permission to command the storming party. This had been the cherished wish of his heart ever since the commencement of the campaign. He had modestly declined the offer of the Governor-Generalship, which had reached him in camp, but

1792. had added : “ I will never quit this country till I have commanded the storming party at Seringapatam.”* And now he was more than ever anxious to lead his men to the assault, for he felt that there was a stain upon his character to be effaced. The request was readily granted, and the prospect of new glory buoyed him up for a time ; but only to make more unendurable his subsequent disappointment.

With bitter anguish of heart, therefore, did he learn, towards the end of February, that the negotiations had so far succeeded, that Tippoo had consented to send two of his sons into the British camp as hostages for the fulfilment of the terms of the peace. What follows is one of the saddest things in Indian history. I tell it, as it was told, on the same day, by an officer on Lord Cornwallis’s staff, writing to a friend in Calcutta.† “ Tippoo,” he said, “ has, this afternoon, commenced the execution of the preliminaries of peace, by sending to camp his second and third sons as hostages, conformably with one of the articles ; and this act was made particularly interesting and satisfactory to Lord Cornwallis, by Tippoo, without mentioning any of the other confederates, insisting that his children should be carried directly to his Lordship’s tent, and there delivered into his arms, with a request that he would, during their absence from their father, consider them, and treat them as his own children. It would at any time have been impossible to witness such a scene, which marked

* The passage of the letter to the Court of Directors, in which Medows declined the Governor-Generalship, is altogether so characteristic, so honourable alike to him and to Lord Cornwallis, that some further passages of it may be given in a note “ Though the elements, more faithful allies to Tippoo than either the Nizam’s troops or the Mahrattas to us, have obliged us to deter the siege of Seringapatam, I still flatter myself it is only postponed, and not put off further than from June to January, when, if he does not make a peace, which I take to be so much the interest of all parties, the loss of his capital, I hope and expect, will be soon followed by the loss of his kingdom. Lord Cornwallis, who sees everything, who does everything, and who is everything, will, I hope, have the peace in such forwardness by Januay, as to enable me to, go home with propriety,

while he stays another year, to complete the great and arduous undertaking he so happily began, has so nobly continued, and, I have no doubt, will so perfectly conclude, to his own honour and your satisfaction. But should things take another turn, and there should not be peace, though I beg leave to decline going to Bengal after January, 1792, I will never quit this country till I have commanded the storming party at Seringapatam, or until the war is over. When, after the handsome and independent fortune I shall have made in your service (I should guess about forty thousand pounds, but I will tell you the uttermost farthing the moment I know it), entirely by proper saving from your liberal appointments, if you shall think ‘ the labourer worthy of his hire,’ I shall be most amply compensated.”

† MS. Correspondence.

so great a change in their father's fortunes, without certain reflections on the instability of human grandeur. But all sensations of that nature were almost totally absorbed in the melancholy damp into which we had been thrown a few hours before, by a fatal act that General Medows had committed upon himself. The column that the General commanded on the night of the 6th did not execute precisely what was allotted to it. But he has, by his uniform conduct through life, established his character with all mankind as the essence of honour and courage, and the mistake on that night was never considered, by any man in the army, in any other light than as one of those errors to which night attacks have been, and ever will be, liable. The General, however, notwithstanding every consolation which his Lordship could give him, continued dissatisfied with himself, and allowed this unlucky affair to prey continually upon his spirits, till this morning, when it seems he could bear it no longer, and discharged a pistol loaded with three bullets into his body. He is still alive, but there can scarcely be hopes that he will recover. You will be able to judge of the severity of this blow upon Lord Cornwallis, when I tell you that there are few men in the world whom his Lordship more esteems and loves. This cruel stroke has poisoned all our enjoyment of the present favourable appearance of public affairs." These gloomy anticipations, however, were not realised. "Most miraculously," as the same officer afterwards wrote, "General Medows recovered, and became perfectly reconciled to himself and all the world."*

* The following cotemporary account of this painful circumstance is given in the "Memoirs of a Field Officer," written by Major Price, formerly Judge Advocate-General of the Bombay Army. It has the strongest possible impress of the truth, and as it was not published till nearly fifty years after the event occurred, it may be assumed that the current story of the day was confirmed by later information. "To account for this rash and extraordinary act, in an individual so eminently distinguished, it is only necessary to explain, that on the night of the memorable attack on the enemy's lines of the 6th February, the General commanded the column which formed the right of that attack

This column had been directed to penetrate the enemy's lines towards their extreme left. Unfortunately, the head of the column, instead of entering the bound-hedge, became engaged in an attack upon the Eddgah redoubt—sometimes called Lally's—where the defence turned out so obstinate and protracted, and occasioned so great a delay, as might have produced results the most disastrous. For, during the untoward delay it was that the enemy from the left were permitted to bear down upon the centre column, commanded by Lord Cornwallis in person. His Lordship had successfully penetrated the line in his front, and having detached the greater part of his column in pursuit of the

1792. On the 18th of March, after much negotiation, and many hitches and obstructions, which every now and then threatened a general break-down, the definitive Treaty was sent out of the Fort, "signed and sealed by Tippoo," and was delivered to Lord Cornwallis on the following day under a salute from a Park of British Artillery and from the guns of Seringapatam booming together. Some considerable accessions of territory to the British Empire in India were the result of this war, but it belongs rather to the historian than to the biographer to write of these things in detail.* Lord Cornwallis returned to

enemy towards the river-side, was for some time exposed to the greatest jeopardy of being cut off by the superior force which now poured upon him. Providentially the troops that remained about his Lordship's person fought with such devoted steadiness and resolution that the assailants were repelled with loss, and it was only about break of day, when not far from the foot of Carigah Hill, that General Medows made his appearance with the right column of attack. It is said that in the irritation of the moment a sharp interrogatory dropped from his Lordship as to 'where General Medows had been disposing of himself?' It has never been satisfactorily explained why it was, that after silencing the Eidgah redoubt, the column was led to the left *without*, rather than, as directed in the plan of the attack, *within*, the bound-hedge. Some, indeed, have asserted that it was through the cowardice or treachery of the guides. This, however, has been denied; and that, although the General was spoken to on the subject, he, as it was said, persisted in moving to the left, *without* the hedge. Harassed by the reflection of the tremendous mischief that might have occurred, had anything fatal occurred to Lord Cornwallis and the column in the centre in consequence of this unfortunate deviation, a mind so sensitive as that of General Medows sunk under the impression; and he felt it beyond all endurance. He had looked forward to the hope that the Sultan would have held out to extremity; and that he must, of course, have been the officer selected to command the storming party. He had, indeed, been frequently heard to repeat that 'a storm was necessary

to his peace of mind.' When, therefore, these hopes were frustrated, and that peace was determined upon, he gave out a report that he was going home in the *Dutton* East Indiaman, then about to sail for England. On the very morning on which he made the lamentable attempt he had conversed privately, and with apparent indifference, with Mr. Uhthoff on the subject of his voyage. The day which had been determined upon by Lord Cornwallis to receive the first visit of the two hostage Princes was the one fixed upon for the perpetration of this act of extraordinary desperation. The moment the salute was firing, on the approach of the Princes, was that chosen by the General to put a period to his existence. His pistol had been loaded with slugs, three of which had lodged in his body. Two of them were promptly extracted. He is said to have expressed the deepest regret for what he had done, as well as his unreserved approbation of every measure adopted by Lord Cornwallis, and that nothing on the part of that noble person had had the slightest influence on his conduct on this melancholy occasion. He could, indeed, be sometimes facetious on the subject, remarking that 'Mr Medows had had a misunderstanding with General Medows, that had terminated in a duel, in which matters had been amicably adjusted.'

* Thomas Munro, writing of the peace, says "In this situation, when extirpation, which had been talked of, seemed so near, the moderation or the policy of Lord Cornwallis granted him peace on the easy terms of his relinquishing half his dominions to the Confederates. Tippoo accepted these conditions on the 24th of February, and

1792.

Madras, and was detained there some time for the settlement of the affairs of the Carnatic. It was not until the 17th of July that he was able to write to Mr. Dundas : “ I have at length settled everything with the Nabob, and I believe in the best manner that it could have been done, unless we had kept possession of the country ; but that point could only have been carried by force, without the least shadow of reason or justice, and consequently was not to be attempted.” Soon after this he sailed for Calcutta.

The generosity and humanity of his nature were signally displayed, in many ways, during this campaign, but in none more than in his tender regard for the interests of the soldiery, who looked up to him as their leader. He was a man of a kind heart and a compassionate nature, and the meanest soldier in the camp was in his eyes an object ever worthy of his most thoughtful care. When he first joined the army, he saw, to his dismay, that the Sepoy regiments of the Madras force had no hospital doolies (litters) attached to them, and that their sick and wounded were carried in the rude blankets or horse-cloths of the country. “ It is hardly credible,” he wrote from camp to the Governor of Madras, “ that so shocking a practice should have existed so long, and that successive Generals could, without making the strongest remonstrances, have seen their wretched soldiers, either with a broken bone or a violent fever, squeezed into a blanket and carried by two of their comrades.” It was not so in the Bengal Army ; so Lord Cornwallis at once directed the deficiency to be supplied. Not long afterwards, it happened that an army surgeon was tried by court-martial, and convicted, of neglecting to dress the wounds and to take proper care of the Europeans who had been wounded at Seringapatam—“ for which heinous breach

orders were instantly issued to stop all working in the trenches. The words which spread such a gloom over the army, by disappointing, not so much their hopes of gain, as of revenge, were these ‘‘ Lord Cornwallis has great pleasure in announcing to the army that preliminaries of peace have been settled between the Confederate power and Tippoo Sultan.’’ But the young critic

presently adds “ So much good sense and military skill has been shown in the conduct of the war, that I have little doubt that the peace has been made with equal judgment.” His natural leanings, however, towards the more vigorous course of action were too strong to be altogether repressed, and he soon broke out again into the language of doubt and reproach.

1792. of duty," said Lord Cornwallis, in a general order, "and offence against the strongest and most affecting ties of humanity, which forcibly plead in every generous breast in favour of men who have shed their blood in the cause of their country, he is condemned only to be suspended from his rank and pay in the service for eight months, and to be reprimanded in public orders." "It is incumbent upon Lord Cornwallis," continues the order, "to show that he sets a higher value upon the lives and limbs of the soldiers than to expose them again to the hazard of falling under the charge of a man who has been guilty of such gross neglect. And he therefore declares to the army that he shall recommend it to the Governor of Fort St. George to continue Mr. —'s suspension until the pleasure of the Court of Directors shall be known; and that he shall order the Paymaster to give no share to Mr. — of that gratuity which was obtained by the blood of those brave men, whom he afterwards suffered either to perish or to languish miserably for several weeks by an inhumanity which, by any person unacquainted with the evidence that was produced against him, would be scarcely credible."

It happened that the same court-martial sat in judgment upon an officer of one of the King's regiments, who had acted with great brutality towards a native of the country. The officer owed money to the poor man, and when he was asked for it, paid the debt, not in coin, but in blows. It is an old story—a common mode of requital, I am afraid, familiar to many generations. The man was sent back again, by order of the commanding officer, accompanied by the Adjutant of the regiment, and the debtor received him, "with the money that was due to him and the stick that was prepared to beat him lying on the same table," and administered a second correction to him, which "divided his ear." But the sympathies of the court were all with the white man, and he was acquitted as though this "new way to pay old debts" were quite in consonance with the acknowledged usages of officers and gentlemen. But Lord Cornwallis branded the man's conduct "as partaking both of ferocity and injustice, and no less unworthy of the manners of gentlemen than disgraceful to the character of officers;" and whilst severely censuring the

1792.

Court, and reminding it that “true humanity consists not in screening the guilty, but in protecting the innocent and redressing the injured,” he told the culprit that if he should “persevere in the shameful practice of beating his creditors instead of paying them, he should not on a future occasion escape the punishment that such conduct deserves.” Cruelty, whether active or passive, evincing itself in brutal outrages, or in negligence scarcely less brutal, filled him with measureless indignation.

But it was not only by words such as these, and by the due exercise of his authority, that he manifested his kindly and generous consideration for all who looked up to him for protection. He was a large-hearted man, capable of heroic self-sacrifice for the good of others. To go to India, in those days, was to go in quest of money. Large fortunes were rapidly made; and men returned to England to buy estates, and to found families. There were many ways to wealth in the last century, lawful and unlawful; honourable and dishonourable. Among the former—among the most lawful and the most honourable means of attaining wealth, the only lawful and honourable way of attaining it *per saltum*—was the acquisition of prize-money. If Lord Cornwallis had at one stroke added 50,000*l.* to his fortune, by receiving his “share” of the booty taken in the war, it would have been simply so much honourable gain, which the world would have said he fairly deserved. He was not a rich man. His estate, indeed, was scarcely adequate to the due maintenance of his title; but he gave up to the army serving under him his own magnificent share of the prize-money as Commander-in-Chief; and General Medows, as second in command, followed his illustrious example.

The unqualified approval of the King and his Ministers was conveyed to him in the most flattering words and in the

* It should also be recorded that during the war he found his expenses far heavier than during peace, and was able to add little to his savings. “You will judge,” he wrote to his brother, “from the savings of other years, that I must have been considerably out of pocket by the war when I tell you that I spent 27,360*l.* (reckoning the current rupee at two shillings) between the 1st of December, 1790, and the 31st of July, 1792, besides the wine from England, and two Arabian horses, for which I am to give English hunters. The immaculate — understood making war in India better, or he would not have paid off the mortgage on one estate in Scotland, and bought another.’

1792. most practical manner, for his services throughout the campaign. The King conferred a marquisate on Earl Cornwallis, and Mr. Pitt offered him the seals of one of the State Secretaryships on his return to England. He had, however, lived too much in the camp to qualify him for parliamentary statesmanship, and he doubted whether his want of skill and practice as a debater would not mar his utility as a member of the Cabinet. "I will freely own to you," he wrote to the great minister, "that if anything could induce me to come forward in a state of business and responsibility at home, it would be the allurement which would be held out to my vanity by being enrolled as a member of an administration, the uprightness of whose principles, and the wisdom and vigour of whose conduct, I so truly respect. I have, however, always been of opinion that no man, who has a regard for the consideration in which he is to stand with this country, should produce himself, even in the House of Lords, as an efficient member of the administration, without possessing such powers and habits of parliamentary debate as would enable him to do justice to a good cause, and defend his measures as well as those of his colleagues. This maxim of *orator fit*, which has produced so much bad speaking and so much *ennui* in the world, may be true in some instances; but he is not to be made *& quovis ligno*, and I should doubt whether the timber ought to undergo the seasoning of above half a century."* In this the extreme conscientiousness of the man was apparent. These considerations have not, in a later, and, it is said, a purer generation, deterred men, wanting in the power of expression, from accepting high office under the Crown. And I cannot help thinking that it would be a misfortune to the country if great administrative powers were, in all cases, subordinated to natural rhetorical gifts.

Civil adminis-
tration.

On the return of Lord Cornwallis to Calcutta, it was his duty to gather up a number of official threads. It would have pleased him much better if the exigencies of war had never drawn him from Bengal, where all the energies of his mind were devoted to the completion of a great scheme of civil ad-

* Cornwallis Correspondence. Ross.

ministration. I have said elsewhere, that “Lord Cornwallis is the first Indian ruler who can properly be regarded as an administrator. Up to the time of his arrival, the English in India had been engaged in a great struggle for existence. Clive conquered the richest province of India. Hastings reduced it to something like order. But it was not until Cornwallis carried to that country the large-minded liberality of a benevolent English statesman, that our administrative efforts took shape and consistency, and the entire internal management of the country under our rule was regulated by a code of written laws (or regulations) intended to confer upon the natives of India the benefits of as much European wisdom and benevolence as was compatible with a due regard for the character of native institutions.” Aided by Mr. Barlow, then secretary to Government—afterwards Provisional Governor-General, and for some years Governor of Madras, he drew up a code of laws, or as he, correcting the language of the secretary, called them “Regulations,” now known to history as the Regulations of 1793, which have since been the basis of our civil administration of India. Sir William Jones, to whom the scheme was submitted, declared that it was worthy of Justinian, and another eminent English lawyer said that they were “worthy of every praise which can be bestowed upon them, and would do credit to any legislation of ancient or modern times.”¹

It is plainly beyond the scope of such a narrative as this to enter minutely into the details of the reforms which Lord Cornwallis introduced into the judicial and revenue systems of the country. The general principle on which the former were based was years afterwards so well described by the man who, of all others, was most competent to speak on the subject, in an autograph memorandum in my possession,† that I cannot do better than insert a portion of it. “Great misunderstandings,” wrote Sir George Barlow, “have prevailed with regard to the new constitution for the civil government of the British possessions in India, established by the Marquis Cornwallis in 1793, and completed by his successor, Marquis Wellesley. The change did not consist in altera-

* Mr Advocate-General (afterwards Sir Wilham) Boroughs.

† It has been already quoted in a previous work by the present author.

1793

tions in the ancient customs and usages of the country, affecting the rights of person and property. It related chiefly to the giving security to those rights, by affording to our native subjects the means of obtaining redress against any infringement of them, either by the Government itself, its officers, or individuals of any character or description. . . . Lord Cornwallis made no innovations on the ancient laws and customs of the people. On the contrary, the main object of the constitution which he established was to secure to them the enjoyment of those laws and customs, with such improvement as times and circumstances might suggest. When he arrived in the country, the Government was, in fact, a pure despotism, with no other check but that which resulted from the character of those by whom the Government was administered. The Governor-General not only was the sole power for making all laws, but he exercised the power of administering the laws in the last resort, and also all the functions of the executive authority. The abuses to which such a system of government is liable, from corruption, negligence, and want of information, are too well known to require being particularised. It is, in fact, from the want of a proper distribution of these authorities in different hands that all abuses in government principally proceed. His Lordship's first step was to make it a fundamental law (1793) that all laws framed by the Government should be printed and published in the form prescribed by Regulation 43, and that the Courts of Judicature should be guided by the laws so printed and published, and no other. It had before been the practice to carry on the affairs of the Government, and those of individuals, by a correspondence by letter with all the subordinate officers."

The important Revenue measures which were introduced into Bengal during the administration of Lord Cornwallis, though necessarily occupying a large space in the history of his government, are so little akin to the general scheme and purport of this book, that any detailed account or discussion of them would be out of place. I think that, perhaps, the merit or the demerit of the great Zemindarry settlement has been assigned overmuch by some writers to the peculiar tastes and tendencies of Lord Cornwallis. Mr. James Mill, in his great history, has said that, "full of the aristocratical

ideas of modern Europe, the aristocratical person now at the head of the Government avowed his intention of establishing an aristocratic upon the European model." In reality, however, the settlement was the work of the middle class civilians of the Company, nearly all of whom advocated a Zemindarry settlement, and many of them a perpetual one. The father of the Permanent Settlement, indeed, was Mr. Thomas Law,* Collector of Behar, who, long before Cornwallis had given the subject a thought, had exhausted the budget of arguments in favour of a system that was "to found on a permanent basis the future security, prosperity, and happiness of the natives." Cornwallis, indeed, when he sailed for India, left this system, which he is said to have initiated, thoroughly understood and in high favour at home, and found it when he arrived to be better known and more cherished in Bengal. That he strongly supported it from the first, and carried it through to its conclusion with no little heartiness and energy, is certain, but it neither took shape nor colour in his mind, and he was no more the originator of it than was Pitt, Dundas, or Charles Grant, who together composed the despatch which gave to the measure the final sanction of the Home Government.†

* A brother of the first Lord Ellenborough

† This statement, made in a former work by the author, is placed beyond a doubt by the following extract of a letter from Mr. Dundas to Lord Cornwallis "In your letter you allude to the important question of the perpetuity of the Decennial Settlement, and I have the very great satisfaction to inform you that the same conveyance which carries this carries out an approbation and confirmation of your sentiments on that subject. It has been longer delayed than I expected, but the delay was unavoidable. Knowing that the Directors would not be induced to take it up so as to consider it with any degree of attention, and knowing that some of the most leading ones among them held an opinion different both from your Lordship and me on the question of perpetuity, and feeling that there was much respect due to the opinion and authority of Mr. Shore, I thought it indispensably necessary both that the

measure must originate with the Board of Control, and likewise that I should induce Mr. Pitt to become my partner in the final consideration of so important and controverted a measure. He accordingly agreed to shut himself up with me for ten days at Wimbledon, and attend to that business only. Charles Grant stayed with us a great part of the time. After a most minute and attentive consideration of the whole subject, I had the satisfaction to find Mr. Pitt entirely of the same opinion with us. We therefore settled a despatch upon the ideas we had formed, and sent it down to the Court of Directors. What I expected happened, the subject was too large for the consideration of the Directors in general, and the few who knew anything concerning it, understanding from me that Mr. Pitt and I were decided in our opinions, thought it best to acquiesce, so that they came to a resolution to adopt entirely the despatch as transmitted by me."

1793. But although these great administrative arrangements may be passed over thus briefly, something must be said in this place of the efforts which Lord Cornwallis made to secure their effective execution. "We have long been of opinion," he wrote, "that no system will ever be carried into effect so long as the personal qualifications of the individuals that may be appointed to superintend it form the only security for the due execution of it. The body of the people must feel and be satisfied of this security before industry will exert itself, or the moneyed men embark their capital in agricultural or commercial speculations. There are certain powers and functions which can never be vested in the same officers without destroying all confidence in the protection of the laws. This remark is particularly applicable to the various functions vested in the present Collectors." And upon these grounds it was resolved that all judicial powers should be withdrawn from the Collectors. Not only had the judicial and the fiscal offices been blended, but the former was altogether subordinated to the latter. The Collector "received no salary as Judge of the Court of Justice or as magistrate of the district. These two offices were considered as appendages to that of Collector, and the duties of the two former stood still whenever they interfered with those of the latter."* That the separation of the offices was an important administrative step, and tended much to the purity and efficiency of the service, is not to be doubted.

The reform of the military service of the country engaged also much of his attention during these last days of his rule, but it had been arranged between the Governor-General and the King's Government that the discussion of the subject should be deferred until Lord Cornwallis's return to England, and it was not, therefore, until November in the following year that he placed on record his views on this important subject, in an elaborate letter to Mr. Dundas, which contains the following suggestive passage : "As the above propositions not only secure a competent income to the military officers serving in India during the early periods of their service, but also the substantial advantage and gratification of an opening being made for their attaining high military rank, as well as

* Minute by Lord Cornwallis.

1793.

the indulgence of being enabled to visit Europe occasionally without relinquishing their pay, and the satisfaction of having it in their power to spend the latter part of their lives in their native country, either by retiring on their full pay, by selling their commissions, or by remaining in the service until they obtain the command and emoluments of a regiment. All ideas must be given up in the army of looking for perquisites or advantages in any shape whatever beyond the open and avowed allowances which shall be allotted to the respective ranks, and if any officer shall be detected in making such attempts, he ought to be tried by a general court-martial for behaving in a manner unbecoming the character of an officer and a gentleman, and, if convicted, dismissed from the service." Nothing did more to improve the character of the officers of the Indian Army than this important reform.

He resigned his seat at the head of the Government to his old friend John Shore, who had come out with the appointment a short time before the date fixed for his Lordship's departure. Of all the servants of the Company he was the one whom Cornwallis would most warmly have welcomed as his successor; but it was his opinion that the Governor-Generalship should be reserved for men of high position in England, who had not been connected with Indian administration.¹ At one time Dundas himself had thought of going out to India to take the supreme direction, but he had the Company's new charter to carry through Parliament, so he could not leave England in time to relieve Lord Cornwallis. In conjunction with Pitt, therefore, he recommended Mr. Shore for the provisional appointment to the Governor-Generalship, with the understanding that if it was afterwards considered advisable to send out a statesman from home, Shore would

* "It is very difficult for a man to divest himself of the prejudices which the habits of twenty years have confirmed, and to govern people who have lived with him so long on a footing of equality. But the Company's servants have still greater obstacles to encounter when they become Governors, for the wretched policy² of the Company has, till the late alterations took place in Bengal, invariably driven all their servants to the alternative of starving or of taking what was not their own; and

although some have been infinitely less guilty in this respect than others, the world will not tamely submit to be reformed by those who have practised it in the smallest degree. . . . A man of upright intentions, with ability and application, that would undertake this government for six or seven years, might do great things for the public, and save a considerable fortune for himself. If you cannot tempt such a man with these prospects, I have no effectual remedy to propose."

1793. take the second seat in Council. When he arrived, Cornwallis was agreeably surprised to find how much he had improved. "I have had the pleasure," he said, "since I wrote last, of receiving my friend Shore, whose mind is become much more enlarged, and whose sentiments are greatly improved by his visit to England."* And in one of the last letters he wrote from India, he assured his friend of his hearty support. So, hopeful of a bright future, he made his preparations for his final departure from Calcutta; and in the autumn of 1793 proceeded to Madras, where he was detained for some time, in consequence of the King's ship bearing the admiral's flag, in which he was to have been conveyed to England, having been compelled to go into dock at Bombay. Lord Cornwallis, therefore, as his military secretary wrote, "took his chance on the *Swallow*;" and sailed from Madras on or about the 10th of October, 1793.

So ended the first Cornwallis administration. It had embraced a period of seven years, during which much good work had been done both in the Camp and in the Council Chamber; and now, as he turned his face homeward, he thought with well-grounded pride and satisfaction of the great changes which had been wrought during his tenure of office, and, most of all, perhaps, of the improved character of the public service of our Indian Empire. If he did not make the military and the civil services of India altogether what they were in the last years of the Company, he so purified, elevated, and invigorated them, that there was no chance of their ever again relapsing into corruption or imbecility. A healthy progress from that time was ensured. It is scarcely too much, indeed, to say that but for the chastening influences of Cornwallis's good seven years' work, it would not have

* Marquis Cornwallis to Mr Dundas, March 24, 1793—(*Cornwallis Correspondence* Ross.) To this Lord Cornwallis added "He has been perfectly fair and good humoured about the Permanent Settlement, and his declaration that he will persevere in the present system of external management, and, above all, his approbation and resolution to support and enforce the late domestic arrangements, have afforded me the greatest satisfaction, and induce me to

hope that I shall have grounds to retract the opinion I before gave, and to admit him as an exception to my general rule. He did not appear to be in the least disappointed by my resolution to retain the government till August, but offered me his cordial assistance whenever I might wish to employ him." Shore was always of opinion that it was a mistake to make the Settlement permanent in the first instance. He would have commenced with a Decennial Settlement.

been my privilege to write the stories of such lives as are included in these volumes.

1794.

He arrived in England in the early part of February, 1794, <sup>Return to
England.</sup> and was soon settled in his Suffolk home. But to one who looked for nothing so much as for repose, the times were unpropitious. Europe was in an unsettled state, and the country had need of the services of all her best soldiers and diplomatists. At such a season it was not to be expected that her Majesty's Ministers would give much time and attention to the affairs of India. They looked upon Lord Cornwallis not as one who had been employed for his country's good in the East, but as one *to be* employed for his country's good in the West. They concerned themselves with the future, not with the past ; and very soon resolved to draw him from his retirement. Early in March he wrote to Mr. Barlow : "Ministers highly approve of all we have done, but in the hurry of such pressing business as must daily occur, and so many urgent avocations, it is difficult to extract from them even a paragraph. Mr. Beaufoy, the Secretary of the Board of Control, who is a very sensible and zealous man, and who knows as much of Indian affairs as most people here (which, God knows, is very little), has promised to send out by these ships a complete approval of the judicial regulations, and a recommendation to extend them if possible to Benares. Lord Hobart, who goes to Madras, with the provisional succession to Bengal, has abilities and habits of business. I have had many long conversations with him, and have endeavoured to tutor him well. I have not time to enter into European politics. The great body of the nation are convinced of the necessity of the war, which may truly be called a war of self-defence, and are warm in support of the Ministers ; but the great exertions of the latter have not been seconded by the skill of our military commanders, and the campaign of '93 in Europe has little resemblance to the campaign of '90 in India. God send that we may do better ; but I do not see any flattering prospect." A month later, he wrote to the same correspondent, saying : "Much as I wish for quiet, I am afraid that I shall be forced from my intended retirement, and be engaged in a very diffi-

1794

cult and hazardous situation in the busy scene on the Continent."

These anticipations were soon fulfilled. Before the end of May, Lord Cornwallis had received the expected summons from the King's Government to proceed to Flanders. On the 2nd of June he landed at Ostend ; but his mission was not a successful one. He had interviews with the Emperor of Austria at Brussels, but his Imperial Majesty was obdurate, and could not be induced to comply with the wishes of the British Government. Before the end of the month he was recalled to England ; and was, on his arrival, in frequent communication with Pitt and Dundas on the subject of the prosecution of the war. "I have taken Lord Hertford's house in Lower Grosvenor-street," he wrote to his brother in July, "completely furnished, for one year, for six hundred guineas, which gives me time to look about me. My expedition has not been a profitable one, but my baggage, horses, and wine are returned ; and I shall keep everything in readiness till the end of the war, that I may not be subject to another expensive equipment." It was then in contemplation to confer upon him the military command in Flanders, to counteract the incapacity of the Duke of York ; but the appointment never took effect, and it was well for him that it did not, for it would have placed him in an anomalous and trying position, in which he might have acquitted himself with honour, but scarcely with success. It was, therefore, a great relief to him to find that the scheme was abandoned. "I should have been," he wrote to Mr. Dundas, "in the most embarrassing and dangerous situation possible, with every prospect of ruin to myself, and very little probability of rendering any essential service to my country." Indeed, he feared that the mere suggestion might have done him injury at Court. "I conclude I am now completely ruined at St. James's," he said. "Indeed, I could not be much worse than I was before ; but that is a circumstance which will not disturb my rest, nor abate in the smallest degree my attachment and affection for the great personage from whom I have formerly received much favour and kindness."

He was now eager to escape into the country, but the critical situation of affairs on the Continent detained him in London till the beginning of September, when he betook him-

self to Bromley. From this place he wrote on the 7th to Mr. Barlow : "The very critical situation of the affairs of Europe, and the part which I have thought it my duty to take in giving every possible assistance to Government, by personal services and military counsel, have a good deal diverted my attention, and still more the attention of those with whom I converse, from the affairs of India ; which, however, next to the immediate safety of Great Britain, will be always uppermost at my heart. . . . When I tell you that I have not had ten days' leisure, since my return from India, to attend to my private affairs, and that my situation is now so uncertain that I may be called upon in twenty-four hours to go to Flanders, you will not expect long letters, and it would require a large volume, if I were to attempt to enter into the politics of Europe, and the horrors of France which increase daily, and exceed all power of belief ; I shall, therefore, only say that, although we have some amongst us that are wicked enough to endeavour to involve this happy island in the same scenes of misery and desolation, and to fill our streets with blood, their number, thank God, is but small, and the great body of the people of all ranks appears firmly attached to our present constitution ; but it is impossible to tell what effect ill success and heavy taxes may have upon this happy disposition."

At the commencement of the following year, Lord Corn-wallis was appointed Master-General of the Ordnance, with a seat in the Cabinet. This compelled him, much against his natural inclinations, to spend the greater part of the year in London. In April, he wrote to his Indian correspondent, Mr. Barlow, assuring him that although he had little time to devote to Indian affairs, he had not ceased to take a lively interest in them. "When I left India," he said, "I thought that I should have nothing to do on my return to this country but to look a little to Asiatic affairs, and to call the attention of Ministers to those points which I knew to be of the most pressing and important nature. The critical situation, however, of all Europe, and of our own country in particular, has entirely engrossed my mind, and the doubt whether we could possibly keep England has almost effaced all ideas of improving our government in India. It is a great personal satisfaction to me, that without my declining the most arduous situations

Master-General of the
Ordnance.

1795—96. in which it was possible a man could be placed, it so happened that I had no share in the last disastrous and disgraceful campaign. But still the prospect of public affairs is exceedingly gloomy, and the ruin which so imminently threatens my country, and all that are most dear to me, presents itself constantly in the most alarming colours to my imagination. Notwithstanding all this, and the great pressure of business which my office of Master-General of Ordnance has imposed upon me, I have sometimes talked to Mr. Dundas about our Regulations, and often to Beaufoy, and to the latter I have given a copy, with your observations, and as he has nothing to attend to but the business of the Board of Control, I have desired him most carefully to watch the correspondence, and not only to be on his guard to prevent any counteraction from design or ignorance, but to see that all instructions were in perfect unison with our general plan, and to consult me whenever he entertained the smallest doubts."

The following year (1796) still found him writing in the same strain. The critical state of affairs in Europe so occupied the minds of the King's Ministers, that they gave no heed to Indian affairs, and Cornwallis himself felt that he was powerless to interfere to any advantage. He was, at this time, disquieted by apprehensions that the system of civil administration, which he had introduced into India, would not be maintained inviolate, and he wrote to his friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. Barlow, encouraging him in the good work which they had both so deeply at heart. "I have received your letters to the 28th May," he wrote, on the 23rd of January, 1796, "and have read them with the enclosures with great attention, and with the warmest gratitude to you, both public and private, for upholding a system which is of such infinite consequence to the cause of humanity, as well as to the British interests in India, and which, without your powerful support, could never have been carried into useful effect. Sorry I am to say that I can render no further service than to endeavour to prevent mischief, for in the present critical situation of affairs, when we are surrounded by so many pressing difficulties and dangers, it is impossible to call the attention of Mr. Dundas and the principal members of administration to so remote and so peaceable a subject as the good government of

1796

India ; and until we can obtain peace at home, I see no prospect of succeeding. At the same time, I must request that you will not be discouraged from persevering in a conduct which must reflect the highest honour on yourself, whilst it renders the most essential service to your country, and from which your benevolent mind will ever derive the most gratifying reflections. Whilst Mr. Beaufoy lived, I could by his help get some paragraphs prepared for approbation, but there is now no officer under the Board of Control that knows anything about India, or that can be a useful instrument to me in any respect. The department over which I preside keeps my hands full of business ; but if I had more leisure, I could not act from myself, or, *without invitation*, take a part in the official line of the Board. Mr. Dundas and I are, however, the best friends possible, and I have no doubt that when the present anxieties which occupy his mind are past, I shall obtain all reasonable attention."

But the time was now approaching when there was to be State of the also a "critical state of affairs" in our Indian possessions. ^{Indian Army.} The officers of the Bengal Army were on the brink of mutiny. They dreaded a serious invasion of their rights, and were banding, or, as it was said, "conspiring" together to maintain them. There was a scheme of "amalgamation" afloat, the result of which would have been seriously detrimental to the interests of the Company's officers, and they resisted it, in some instances, with an amount of vehemence not consistent with military discipline. Indeed, the excitement at one time was so great that a very little would have stirred the smouldering fire into a blaze. The state of affairs was alarming, and the alarm communicated itself to the Government in England. It was plainly necessary to do something. The something to be done took the shape of a peace mission from home. Some high officer of the Government was to go out to India, conciliatory but resolute, with the olive branch in one hand, and the *fascæs* of the law in the other. But who was to proceed on this mission ? The choice lay between Mr. Dundas, the President of the Board of Control, and Lord Cornwallis, the sometime Governor-General of India ; and for a while the probabilities of selection oscillated between the two. Mr. Dundas was more willing to go than Lord Corn-

1796—97. wallis ; but the Government, who probably thought also that the latter was the more fitting agent of the two, declared that the services of Dundas could not be spared in that conjuncture at home ; so most reluctantly Cornwallis accepted the mission, and forthwith began to make preparations for his voyage to India. “ You will, no doubt,” he wrote from Culford, to a friend in India, on the 31st of January, 1797, “ be much astonished at the news of my return to India, but my earnest solicitude for the welfare of my country, and my particular apprehensions lest our Asiatic possessions should either be torn from us, or rendered a useless and unprofitable appendage to the British Empire, have induced me to sacrifice every personal consideration, and to gratify the wishes of Government, and I may venture to say of the public at large, by coming forward again, at this late period of my life, to endeavour to restore our affairs in India to the prosperous state in which I left them. As I am not quite certain that Scott or Robinson may be at the Presidency, I have thought it more safe to address myself to you, to request that you will apply to them, or, in their absence, to some friend who will undertake the commission, to provide for me against my arrival three good and quiet saddle-horses, such as Robinson or Scott, or those who were in the habit of riding with me, may judge to be likely to suit me. I shall likewise want a set of servants for the house upon a similar plan to the establishment I formerly had. The Consomah who was before with me was a good man. I shall also want a palanquin, a phaeton, and a good coach, or chariot, with six carriage-horses, two of which must be very quiet and proper for the phaeton. I shall bring my successor out with me, and I shall hope that the object of my mission may be attained in about a twelvemonth, as you will easily conceive that a long residence in India will not suit me. It is not probable that any person will come out with me except Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan, of the Bengal establishment, and one aide-de-camp ; you will oblige me, therefore, if you could, on my arrival, point out any young man who would act as my private secretary in Haldane’s situation, and take a degree of superintendence of my household. I think if Mr. Phillips is settled in Calcutta, and not engaged in commercial concerns, that he would be a proper person.”

1797.

But this special mission to India belongs only to the “History of Events that never happened.” The danger subsided, and with it the alarm. The officers of the Company’s army, under sedative assurances, and satisfying concessions, began to return to their allegiance, and it was not necessary to apply the special remedies, of which I have spoken, to a disease which was dying out by itself. Instead of Lord Cornwallis going out to India as Governor-General, with his successor in his train, Lord Mornington was selected to be Governor-General in succession to Sir John Shore. The change delighted Lord Cornwallis. At the call of his King and his country, he was ready to go to India—as he would have gone anywhere, under a strong sense of duty—but he thankfully withdrew from the mission when he was no longer bound by these loyal considerations to undertake it. He had faith in the young statesman who had been selected for office; and he saw him depart with pleasure.

“When the shameful conduct of the Bengal officers,” he wrote to Mr. Barlow, in October, “threatened India with immediate ruin, and it was thought that my services might be of consequence, I did not refuse to come forward. The business of my instructions was ill-managed here, and the favourable turn of affairs in Bengal rendered my presence less necessary. It is not wonderful, therefore, that I should avail myself of so fair an excuse to decline an arduous task, which, from untoward circumstances, I should have undertaken with peculiar disadvantage. Lord Mornington, your new Governor-General, is a man of very considerable abilities, and most excellent character. I have known him from his childhood, and have always lived on the most friendly habits with him. He goes out with the best and purest dispositions. He is an enthusiast for the preservation of that plan of government which, without your powerful assistance, could never have been either formed or maintained. His Lordship has no private views, nor a wish to do anything but what is for the public good; and I have taken upon myself to answer that you will have no reserve with him, either in regard to men or measures. Having assured you that Lord Mornington thinks exactly as I do both about India and yourself, I have only to add my sincere good wishes for your health and prosperity, and to ex-

The new
Governor-
General.

1798.

press my hopes that when our dangers are over, we may meet happily in this country."

And now we come to an epoch in the great and varied career of Lord Cornwallis, which, though to the general student of English history more interesting than any other, is the one of which most has been written by others, and of which I am least called upon to write. In a time of the greatest trouble and difficulty he was appointed Lord-Lieutenant and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. Mr. Pitt said that, in accepting the office, Cornwallis had "conferred the most essential obligation on the public which it can, perhaps, ever receive from the services of any individual." For it was one of those situations in which no virtue and no wisdom can preserve a man wholly from reproach. He had to combat a great rebellion, and in combating it he was as merciful as he was resolute and courageous. But it was a necessity of his position in such a conjuncture that, in the eyes of some, he should have done too much, and that in the eyes of others he should have done too little. Of all the posts which he ever held, this was the one the tenure of which was least gratifying to his feelings. "The violence of our friends," he wrote to General Ross, "and their folly in endeavouring to make it a religious war, added to the ferocity of our troops, who delight in murder, most powerfully counteract all plans of conciliation. The life of a Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland comes up to my idea of perfect misery; but if I can accomplish the great object of consolidating the British Empire, I shall be sufficiently repaid." And again, soon afterwards, to the same correspondent: "Of all the situations which I ever held, the present is by far the most intolerable to me, and I have often within the same fortnight wished myself back in Bengal." One of his troubles was the Irish Militia, who had all the characteristic cruelty of cowards. "The Irish Militia," wrote Cornwallis to the Duke of Portland, "are totally without discipline, contemptible before the enemy when any serious resistance was made to them, but ferocious and cruel in the extreme when any poor wretches either with or without arms come within their power; in short, murder appears to be their favourite pastime." The intemperate language of the ultra-loyalists was another source of inquietude to him. "The

minds of people are now in such a state," he wrote to the Duke 1799—1801 of Portland, "that nothing but blood will satisfy them; and, although they will not admit the term, their conversation and conduct point to no other mode of concluding this unhappy business than that of extirpation." There were others whose tendencies were towards the opposite extreme; but Lord Cornwallis endeavoured to steer a middle course, and when he wrote to the Duke of Leinster, saying: "I hope and trust that to every candid mind the system of my government will appear conciliatory and moderate; but if I were to insult the feelings of the loyal, and to protect the characters and properties of those who attempted to destroy them, such conduct would not be called moderation, but criminal weakness"—I think when he said this he expressed a well-grounded confidence in the success of his measures, and in the rectitude of principle which inspired them.

Engaged in these great measures, firstly of suppression and then of conciliation, Lord Cornwallis remained at his post in Ireland up to the end of May, 1801. He had not much leisure to think of India, but a letter from Lord Wellesley, announcing the conquest of Mysore and the death of Tippoo Sultan, for a while revived his old interest in the country which he had so long governed. "This is, indeed, a great event," he wrote to General Ross, "and perfectly secures us in that part of the world; for I think, even if Zeman Shah could get to India, that he could not succeed when deprived of the co-operation of Tippoo." Soon afterwards the gratifying intelligence came to him that the army which had taken Seringapatam, not less mindful, perhaps, of his personal generosity, in foregoing his prize-money, than of his military exploits in the first Mysore war, had voted him an address, and presented him with the sword and turban of Tippoo. He was sometimes appealed to in matters connected with Indian government, and his interposition was sought, but he was unwilling to interfere, and he was personally reluctant to place himself in opposition to Mr. Dundas, who, he said, had behaved to him "in a more fair and friendly manner than any other member of the Cabinet."

Lord Cornwallis, as I have said, crossed the Channel at the end of May, 1801, but the blessing of repose was not then

1801—1802. within his reach. A French invasion was at that time expected, and he was placed in command of the Eastern division of the army—" eight weak regiments of militia," as he said, " and two regiments of dragoons." " In our wooden walls alone," he wrote, a day or two afterwards, " must we place our trust; we should make a sad business of it on shore." But instead of an invasion, there was peace. And Lord Cornwallis was selected to be the British Plenipotentiary who was to proceed to Amiens to negotiate the treaty with Napoleon. On the 3rd of November, 1801, he crossed over to Calais. On the 18th of November he wrote to his friend Barlow, in Calcutta, saying: " I have been so constantly occupied, and my mind has been so much agitated by the critical state of public affairs, and the very important part which I was obliged to take in the great questions of the Union, and the privileges proposed to be granted to the Catholics of Ireland, that I could attend to no other matters. On my return to England, on the change of administration, where I expected (after winding up the Irish business, and pacifying those who had claims for services in the Union contest) to retire and enjoy some quiet, I was called upon, in consequence of the serious preparations which the French were making to invade us, to accept the command in the Eastern District, and by the date of this letter you will see that I have now undertaken to put the finishing hand to the work of peace, which was most ardently desired by the nation, and which appeared to me to be necessary for the preservation of our country. . . . The Definitive Treaty will, I hope, be concluded in a few weeks. Bonaparte has, for the present, tranquillised France. The people are kept in excellent order: would to God that the discontented in England could see the *state of liberty* which this country, so much the object of their envy, enjoys! All persons here speak with horror of the Revolution."

The Peace of Amiens.

At last it seemed that the long-coveted season of repose was really at hand. The peace of Amiens was concluded; and Lord Cornwallis returned to England, and betook himself to the country. " For a long time past," he wrote from Bromley, in September, 1802, to the same correspondent, " I have been out of the way of knowing what was going forward respecting India, and it was not until Lord Castlereagh called on me last

week on his way from Ireland (by Mr. Dundas's house in 1802—1803. Scotland) to London, that I had an idea of the style of letters which have of late been sent by the Court of Directors to Lord Wellesley.* I most earnestly hope that matters may be so accommodated as to induce his Lordship to continue another year in the Government, which, either with a view to its immediate or future effects, I conceive to be of the utmost importance to the interests of the British Empire. . . . I have now retired for ever from all public situation, but my feelings are still alive to the honour and interests of my country, and I shall to the end of my life reflect with the most heartfelt satisfaction, that by adopting and patronising your suggestions, I laid the foundation of a system for the prosperity of our Indian Empire, which has so gloriously flourished and risen to such height under the splendid administration of Lord Wellesley."

But, brilliant as were these prospects, the time soon came State of when the territorial acquisitions of Lord Wellesley alarmed India. Lord Cornwallis. It seemed to him that our empire was growing too large, and that we should find it difficult to administer its affairs with advantage to so immense a population. On this subject he wrote from Culford, in August,

* In another letter to Barlow, who, it was then held, would succeed Lord Wellesley, Lord Cornwallis wrote "When you take upon yourself the burdensome charge of administering the affairs of our vast Asiatic Empire, your experience and excellent understanding will, I am persuaded, conduct you safely and with honour through all difficulties, and in your Eastern government you will not need any counsel from your friends. But there is one part of your business on which, as it relates to this country, I will presume to offer some friendly advice. The point to which I allude is your correspondence with the Court of Directors, and your seeming attention to them, on those subjects in which they have a constitutional right to interfere. It has fallen in my way to know the embarrassments which the neglect or incivility of Lords Wellesley and Clive to their honourable masters have occasioned to the Ministers and the Board of Control. Be civil to the Directors, and avoid any direct attack on the authority of the Court, and you may do everything

which your zeal for the public welfare would make you desire. Lord Castle-reagh has fought a hard battle for the College, and has succeeded as far as relates to Bengal. I have taken great pains, and I think I have nearly convinced him, not only that there should be but one College for all our Indian settlements, but that he should prepare his mind to look for an early period when the allowances of the servants of the subordinate Presidencies should, in proportion to the trust and labour of their respective offices, be made equal to those in Bengal, and that it was as well worth while not to force a war to cheat the Company and rob and oppress their subjects in latitude eleven as in latitude twenty-three. Had Lord Wellesley thought it worth while to use a little management with the Court of Directors, he might have settled his College, or any plan within moderate bounds that he might have chosen." On this subject of the College, further information is given in the Memoir of Sir Charles Metcalfe, and in the Appendix.

1804.

1804, putting the whole case in a few pregnant sentences : “ By the last accounts from India, affairs appear to be in a most prosperous state. You have dictated the terms of peace, and have obtained every possession in India that could be desired. The question here from many persons is, Have we not too much ? But I hardly know, when the power was in our hands, what part of our acquisitions we could prudently have relinquished.” He little thought, when he wrote this, that out of the state of things that had then arisen in India, there was growing up that which in a very little time would draw him again from his retirement, and compel him to go forth once more with the harness on his back. But so it was. Lord Wellesley had been playing the great game with such success, that he had brought our Indian Empire to the very verge of bankruptcy. And the game was not yet played out. What, then, was to be done ? Lord Wellesley was ambitious. Lord Wellesley was insubordinate. The advisers in whom he most trusted counselled him not to throw up the cards. But there was no money even to carry on the Trade ; for the war engulfed every rupee. To the Directors in Leadenhall-street the crisis of ruin appeared to be imminent. They stood aghast at the prospect before them. It was necessary to do something—and that speedily. Nothing but a change of government would suffice to meet the difficulties of the case. Orders might be sent to India ; but it was one thing to draft instructions, another to secure obedience to them. It had been arranged that Sir George Barlow should succeed Lord Wellesley in the Governor-Generalship. But Barlow was a member of Lord Wellesley’s Government ; and the Court of Directors were, therefore, alarmed at the thought of his succession. The King’s Ministers concurred in opinion with the Company that it was desirable to send out an English statesman with no leanings towards the prosecution of the war—a safe man, moderate but resolute, and if clothed with the authority of a great foregone career, so much the better. It was only in the common course of things that the thoughts of the Government should have turned at once to Lord Cornwallis. There was a difficulty—an emergency—and again they turned to the old quarter for help.

What followed may be told in the words of Lord Cornwallis. Writing from Culford, on January 6th, 1805, to Sir George Barlow, he said: "I can hardly figure to myself the astonishment which you must feel at hearing that I am again returning to the station of Governor-General, and, lest you should suppose that I can in the smallest degree have altered my sentiments with regard to yourself, and have ceased to think you capable of discharging the duties of that office to your own credit, and to the honour and advantage of the Company and of your country, I take the earliest opportunity that offers to explain to you in a few words the circumstances which have produced this extraordinary event. You will recollect that in the course of last year I informed you that Lord Wellesley's neglect and contemptuous treatment of the Court of Directors was exceedingly embarrassing to the King's Government at home. A line of conduct on his part somewhat similar has of late extended itself to that very Government, and his Majesty's Ministers have been liable to be called upon to account for measures of great importance, of the causes of which they were totally ignorant, although opportunities had offered for communication. I shall enter no further into these matters, but pass over to what immediately concerns yourself and my appointment. A few weeks ago Lord Castlereagh came down to this place, and after some previous conversation about India, informed me that the dissatisfaction of the Court of Directors with the conduct of Lord W. had risen to such a height, that it was absolutely necessary that he should be desired to leave the Government, that Ministers were very uneasy at the present state of matters, and expressed the earnest wish of his Majesty's confidential servants, that I would for a short time take the direction of affairs in that country. I answered, that I had not been in the habit of refusing my services, whenever they might be thought useful, but that I was too old for such an undertaking, and I felt it to be the more unnecessary, as the person named for the succession to the Government was, in my opinion, more capable of making a satisfactory arrangement than myself. He then informed me that the appointment of any Company's servant to the Government-General

1804—1805.

1804—1805. was *at this moment* out of the question ; and in the particular case alluded to, it was the more impossible, as the Court of Directors could by no means be brought to consent to the succession of a member of Lord Wellesley's Government. After some discussion upon this subject, I proposed to undertake the present mission, provided that on my leaving the country I could be assured that you were to succeed me. Lord Castlereagh declared that an assurance of that kind was not to be expected, and could only say that my going would open the only chance for your succession. Unemployed as I have long been, and appeared likely to remain, in the line of my profession, and, in its present state, useless to my own family, I have consented to take the rash step of returning to India, by which, if I should ultimately be the means of placing the charge of our Asiatic Empire in your hands, I shall feel that I have rendered an essential service to my country."

Truly was it a hazardous duty, which he had thus undertaken at the age of sixty-five. There was nothing for which he longed more than for rest. He had an ample store of honour—he had an ample store of wealth. It was intended that he should sojourn only for a little while in India, and he could add but little, therefore, to either store. The service, indeed, upon which he was going, was an unpopular and a thankless one. He was going upon a service of peace and retrenchment. Many private interests were likely to suffer grievously by the course of severe economy on which he was about to enter ; and people, in such a case, rarely discriminate between the authors and the agents of the measures which injuriously affect them. War is always popular in India ; and there was scarcely a man in the two services, from the veteran warrior Lake, to the boy-civilian Metcalfe, who did not utterly abhor and vehemently condemn the recreant policy of withdrawing from the contest before the great game had been played out. It is scarcely possible to conceive a mission less attractive than that on which the fine old soldier now set out, leaving behind him all that he held most dear, because he felt that it was his duty to go. It has been said that he "caught with the enthusiasm, which belongs to good and great minds, at the prospect of performing one more important service to his country before he died ;" and tha

“listened with avidity to those who, desirous of the authority 1804—1805. of his great name to their plans, represented to him that his presence alone could save from inevitable ruin the empire which he had before ruled with so much glory.” But I Sir John Malcolm. doubt whether he caught with any enthusiasm, or any avidity, at the proposal, honourable as it was to him, and serviceable as it might be to his country. He did not hesitate to accept the charge entrusted to him. He had never hesitated in his life to do, at any cost to himself, that which he believed his country demanded from him. But he would fain have spent the remaining years of his life in repose. It was not the enthusiasm of youth that sent him, but an irresistible sense of self-denying duty.

Too soon, however, did Lord Cornwallis find that the task Second Governor-Generalship. 1805. which he had set himself was one beyond his powers adequately to perform. The hardships of life on board ship tried him severely. He would not suffer any distinctions, with respect to food and water, to be made in his favour, and the vessel was inadequately supplied. The discomforts to which he was subjected might have been nothing to a young man in robust health, but they aggravated the growing infirmities of age, and he arrived in Calcutta in very feeble health. He found things there even in a worse state than he had anticipated. Assuming the reins of government on the 30th of July, 1805, he began at once to perform the ungrateful work which had been assigned to him. “Finding,” he wrote two days afterwards, “to my great concern, that we are still at war with Holkar, and that we can hardly be said to be at peace with Scindiah, I have determined to proceed immediately to the Upper Provinces, that I may be at hand to avail myself of the interval, which the present rainy season must occasion in the military operations, to endeavour, if it can be done without a sacrifice of our honour, to terminate by negotiation a contest in which the most brilliant success can afford us no solid benefit, and which, if it should continue, must involve us in pecuniary difficulties, which we shall hardly be able to surmount.” At this time Lord Wellesley was in Calcutta, and it devolved upon Sir George Barlow to bridge over the

1805. gulf which lay between the old policy and the new, so as to mitigate as much as possible the evils of an abrupt and violent transition—to make the new ruler thoroughly understand the measures of the old, and to reconcile the old to the measures of the new. In this he succeeded with wonderful address. The fact is, that Lord Wellesley had already begun to see plainly that it was wholly impossible to play the great game any longer with an exhausted treasury, and with our credit at the lowest ebb.*

Last days

Attended by some of the chief officers of the Secretariat, and by the members of his own personal Staff, Lord Cornwallis embarked on board his state-pinnace, and proceeded up the river. But it was very soon apparent that he was breaking down. Day by day the executive officers who attended him saw that he was growing more feeble, and that sustained labour was becoming a greater difficulty and a greater pain. There were times when he could converse clearly and forcibly on the state of public affairs, and communicate to his chief secretary, Mr. Edmonstone, the instructions which he wished to be conveyed to the leading functionaries, civil and military, in different parts of the country; but at others he was wholly incapable of holding the helm, and the orders which went

* At the commencement of a memorandum before me in the handwriting of Sir George Barlow, I find it written. "With a view of giving to Lord Cornwallis a correct view of the arrangements which Lord Wellesley had it in contemplation to make with Scindiah respecting the territories conquered from him in Hindostan, Sir George Barlow drew up a letter on the subject addressed to Lord Cornwallis. This letter was dated the 7th of August, 1805, at which time both Lord Cornwallis and Lord Wellesley were present at Calcutta, the latter waiting only the completion of the arrangements for his embarkation for England. Previous to sending this letter to Lord Cornwallis, he enclosed the draft to Marquis Wellesley, who returned it with a note in his own handwriting in the margin. This note Sir George Barlow incorporated with the [] paragraph of his letter numbered 26, and then sent the fair draft to Lord Cornwallis. This letter affords evidence (which must supersede whatever has

appeared at variance with it) that it was Lord Wellesley's intention, whatever might be his immediate impressions on the subject, to renew our alliances and connexions with the petty states in the north-west of India as soon as (but not before) *he had come to a settlement with Dowlut Row*.^{Scindiah} A lasting peace with Scindiah was the paramount consideration in his Lordship's mind, and there is every presumption that he would not have allowed any fanciful theories of supposed advantages from taking all these petty states under our protection as allies to have interfered with the great objects to be accomplished by a permanent and satisfactory peace with Scindiah. It is probable that when he had come to a full knowledge of the gross misconduct of the Rajah of Jerg-nagui, he would not, as was the case with Sir George Barlow, have allowed his interests to have stood in the way of the conclusion of that arrangement."

1805.

forth in his name, though based upon the sentiments which he had been able to express at intervals, were never supervised by him. I have before me the daily bulletins of the Governor-General's health, written by his private secretary, Mr. George Robinson,* to Sir George Barlow, throughout the whole of September up to the hour of Cornwallis's death. It is obvious that at the beginning of the former month little hope was entertained of his final recovery, for he frequently, in the mornings, fell into fits, attended sometimes with convulsions, and more frequently with deadly chills; and although he improved as the day advanced, and gained some strength under the influence of stimulants, it was plain that his vigour was gone, and that he was gradually sinking. The actual disease which had developed itself was dropsy; but his medical attendants were more fearful of the results of general debility, of which this specific complaint may have been more a consequence than a cause. And for many hours together there was often extreme languor, and then a sudden outburst of unexpected physical and intellectual vigour. Mr. Edmonstone received his political instructions whenever he was capable of issuing them; and though there was a varying amount of clearness and distinctness in them, it was plain that he always thoroughly comprehended the question under consideration. About the middle of the month there were apparent symptoms of improvement; but it was considered advisable, as the pinnace laboured up the river, that, although it might on some accounts be advantageous that the Governor-General should be landed, it would, on the whole, be better that he should remain on board, to escape the fatigue and distraction of deputations and addresses, which would pour in at different points, if it were known that he was on shore. As the month advanced, there were very manifest fluctuations, which sometimes encouraged his friends to hope that he might yet rally; but towards the close of it these favourable anticipations ceased, and it was necessary to send for Sir George Barlow to take up the reins of government. On the 1st of October, Mr. Robinson wrote to him, saying that he feared the hopes they had encouraged were delusive, "for Lord Cornwallis," he added, "has had a very restless night, attended

* Afterwards Sir George Robinson

1805.

with a considerable difficulty in breathing, and though he perseveres in not taking to his bed entirely, and probably will do so to the last, I feel no confidence in his existence being prolonged even from hour to hour, so extremely feeble and weak is he become. Yet in this state, his anxiety for the accomplishment of those objects to which his valuable life will ultimately fall a sacrifice, adheres to him still; he is impatient of detention here, speaks of the impropriety of delays, has inquired after Edmonstone, and asked whether any news was received to-day from Malcolm. I have no idea, however, that he can survive to the period of your arrival, and in his present weak state I cannot say I wish he should, as it could only wound your feelings, as much as it does ours, to see him in a condition which precludes all rational hope of a recovery. I shall watch, however, his most conscious moments, and many such occur through the day, to tell him that you entirely concur in all the principal points of the plan, submitted by way of outline at first, but subsequently put into the form of official instructions to Lord Lake, for a final arrangement with Scindiah; and if anything can afford him satisfaction, I think the assurance of this will." On the 3rd, the report was that the Governor-General was growing weaker and weaker; and on the 5th of October it was announced that, at a quarter past seven on the evening of that day, "our most revered friend quitted the world without pain or struggle." He seemed to have died from absolute exhaustion.

And so passed away one of the best and most blameless men that have ever devoted their lives to the service of their country. He was not inspired by any lofty genius, but in no man, perhaps, in the great muster-roll of English Heroes, can it truly be said that there were more serviceable qualities, more sterling integrity, and a more abiding sense of Public Duty. For Duty he lived and he died. I do not know in the whole range of our history a more reliable man—a man who in his time was more trusted for the safe performance of duties of a very varied character. But, as I have said at the outset of this sketch, I have selected his life for illustration because no man did more to purify the public services of India, and to make the writing of such a book as this a privilege and a pleasure to the biographer.

SIR JOHN MALCOLM.

[BORN 1769.—DIED 1833.]

A SHORT hour's walk from the thriving little town of 1769. Langholm, in Dumfries-shire, there lived and toiled an industrious farmer, named George Malcolm, who cultivated an estate known as "Burnfoot," and lived there, on the beautiful banks of the Esk, surrounded by a fine family of children at that time far from complete. He was a man of more than common enlightenment for his station, for he had been trained for the Church, and, better still, of sterling integrity of character. His wife, too—a member of the Pasley family—was a woman excellent in all domestic relations, and of intelligence of a high order. As they dwelt together there, at Burnfoot, on the 2nd of May, 1769, a fourth son was born unto them, who in due course was christened John. It happened that on the very day before there came into the world one who was afterwards one of John Malcolm's closest friends, and the greatest man of the age in which he lived—Arthur Wesley, or Wellesley, known to a later generation as the Duke of Wellington—the "Great Duke."^{*}

I have no passion for the discovery of juvenile phenomena. I do not know that John Malcolm differed much from other healthy, robust, intelligent boys, such as swarm in all parts of our country. He was very good at "paddling in the burn," from which the name of the paternal estate was derived. Perhaps he was rather prone towards mischief, and not as industrious as could have been wished. He was rather given to the bad habit of putting off the learning of his lessons until he was fairly on the start for the parish school, when he trudged

* Napoleon the First was born in the same year.

1780
Early education

up the hill book in hand, and eye intent on the page. The schoolmaster used to say, when any wild pranks of mysterious origin had been committed, “Jock’s at the bottom of it.” There was not always good evidential proofs of this, but worthy Archibald Graham had ever a strong conviction of the fact, and solemnly enunciated his belief that Jack, who was indeed the scapegrace, perhaps the scapegoat, of the family, was profoundly “at the bottom of it”—deep in amidst the mud, not of the transparent Esk, but of some slough imagined by the worthy preceptor of Westerkirk.*

It is not forbidden to us to believe that Promotion cometh from the North. In those days an astonishing amount of patronage fell upon the striving inhabitants of Scotland and the Border. It may seem strange that a yeoman of Dumfries-shire should have the power of providing, in all the finest services open to the nation, one after another, for a number of brave, clever Eskdale boys. But so it was. Robert, the eldest, had permission from the East India Company to go out to shake the pagoda-tree, as a member of their Civil Service. James, the second son (afterwards Sir James), received a commission in the Marines. For the third son, Pulteny (afterwards Admiral Sir Pulteny), a midshipman’s berth was provided. And John, as soon as he was old enough, was set down for the Company’s military service. He was only eleven years old when his father received, through the Johnstones of Alva, an offer of an appointment in the Indian Army; but John was then too young to go abroad. Soon afterwards, however, his uncle, John Pasley, a thriving merchant, carried him up to London, and was anxious, above all things, to qualify him to “pass at the India House.” But the good uncle, in November, 1781, wrote that, although tall of his age, Johnny would certainly not pass. In this he was altogether wrong. The experiment was made. John Malcolm went up, nothing daunted, before an august assemblage of Directors. They were pleased by his juvenile appearance and his good looks, and one of them said, “My little man, what would you do if you were to meet Hyder Ali?” “Do!” said

* Mr. Graham lived to see his old pupil recognised by the world both as a man of thought and a man of action. Malcolm is said to have sent him a copy of the “History of Persia,” with “Jock’s at the bottom of it” written on the title-page

the boyish aspirant ; “ why, sir, I would cut with my sword and cut off his head.” Upon which evidence of spirit and determination they declared that he “ would do,” and forthwith passed him as a cadet. It was not necessary that he should sail immediately ; so his good uncle put him to school again in the neighbourhood of London ; and not until the month of April, 1783, did the ship which conveyed him to India anchor in the Madras Roads.[†] The family connexions, who received him on his arrival, wrote to Burnfoot that Jack had grown a head and shoulders on the voyage, and was one of the finest and best-tempered lads ever seen in the world.

When John Malcolm arrived in India, the French and English were contesting the possession of Southern India. John went with his friends to Vellore to do garrison duty there, as he was considered too young to take the field. Peace, however, having been declared in the West, the English and French left off fighting in the East ; and so the former had nothing to do but to carry on, without any distractions, the war against the great Mahomedan usurpers of Mysore. Hyder Ali had died without the aid of Johnny Malcolm’s sword, and Tippoo raged in his stead. After a while, however (1784), a treaty of peace was signed, and an exchange of prisoners was decreed. This interchange sent young John Malcolm on his first detached service. The English prisoners were to be brought to our frontier, and there received by a detachment of British troops. John Malcolm was appointed to command this detachment, which was to meet Major (afterwards Sir Thomas) Dallas, who was to convey them safely beyond the territory of Mysore. When Dallas met the detachment coming from the Company’s territories, he saw a slight, rosy, healthy-looking English boy astride on a rough pony, and asked him for his commanding officer. “ I am the commanding officer,” said John Malcolm, drawing himself up on his saddle. Dallas smiled ; but the friendship which then commenced between the two lasted until it was severed by the death of the elder man.

John Malcolm went out so very young to India—he was a

[†] In the following year (1781), fifteen vice, by Act of Parliament — Pitt’s was fixed as the minimum age for entrance into the Company’s Military Service — India Bill

1781—90 commissioned officer and his own master at an age when, in England, boys were commonly subjected to the discipline of the flogging-block—that if he did not at first make use of his liberty and his pseudo-manhood in the most virtuous and forbearing manner, there is nothing very surprising in the failure. He was assailed by many temptations, and, being of a frank, open, unsuspecting nature, he went astray before he knew whither he was tending. He was generous, open-hearted, and open-handed. He got into debt, and suffered for it. He did not, as some are wont to do in such an extremity; he did not wipe out old obligations by incurring new. But he set to work right manfully to extricate himself. He stinted and starved; and it is recorded of him that an old native woman in the regimental bazaar, taking compassion upon his youth, implored him to receive supplies from her, to be paid for at his convenience. For this act of kindness and humanity he was ever grateful; and it did not merely take the shape of words, for, in after days, he settled a pension on her for the rest of her life.

Soon better days began to dawn upon him. He was contrite, and confessed his errors; and he wrote home that he was afraid his parents would think that all their good advice had been quite thrown away upon him. “I must own, to my shame,” he said, “that you had too much reason to think so. All that I now expect is, that my friends will forget the past part of my conduct.” And from that time (1788) he never relapsed, but went forward steadily to the great goal of honourable success.

The war
with Tippoo.

A life of active service was now before him. The peace was at an end. Tippoo had broken it by ravaging the country of our ally, the Rajah of Travancore, and Lord Cornwallis had taken the field against him. Of the events of the two campaigns which followed I have spoken in the preceding Memoir. The regiment to which John Malcolm was attached was ordered to co-operate with the troops of the Nizam. On this service he was exposed to great hardships, and first learnt the realities of Indian war. There was little resistance, however, to the progress of our troops until they came to Copoulee. There he saw how a strong Indian fortress may resist for months the fire of European artillery. For six months

Copoulce held out, and then the garrison surrendered under the moral influence engendered by the fall of Bangalore to Cornwallis's army. Not long afterwards, Malcolm's regiment joined the main army of the Nizam, which was pushing forward to co-operate with the British troops then marching on Seringapatam. In the Nizam's camp he made the acquaintance of two of the foremost of our political or diplomatic officers—Sir John Kennaway and Mr. Graeme Mercer.* A new ambition then stirred within him. He asked himself whether he also might not detach himself from the formalities of regimental life, become a diplomatist, and negotiate great treaties with the Native powers.

He was now a man full-grown, tall and handsome, and of Preparing for such a cheerful address, that he carried sunshine with him whithersoever he went. He was remarkably active and fond of sport, and so playful, that he went by the name of "Boy Malcolm," and retained it long after he was well advanced in years, and had attained high office in the State. But he had begun seriously to consider that it was his duty to earn a reputation as something more than a crack shot and a noted gymnast. The first step towards this was the study of the native languages; and Mr. Graeme Mercer, taking a fancy for the youth, encouraged his desire to learn Persian, and gave him the use of his own Moonshie. Of the opportunity thus afforded him he made good use. Nor was the study of the languages the only improving pursuit to which he devoted himself. He applied himself to the investigation of Indian history, and endeavoured to master the principles by the observance of which our great Indian Empire had been founded, and on which alone it could be maintained. In the prosecution of this, he began diligently to record upon paper the results of his inquiries and the substance of his reflections, and from that time to the end of his days he was ever a great writer. In the

* As the terms "Political Officer" and "Political Department" will be found of frequent occurrence in these Memoirs, it may be advisable to explain that in the phraseology of the Anglo-Indian Government "political" means diplomatic, and something more. The duties of a political officer are mainly in connexion with the Native States of India, or with the princes and chiefs

who have governed Native States, but sometimes their functions are of an administrative as well as of a diplomatic character; and, in attendance upon an army in the field, they conduct negotiations, advise, and sometimes control the military authorities, superintend the Intelligence Department, and often collect the supplies

1791

entries, scattered over a large collection of manuscript books, may be seen at how early a period he formed, and how consistently he clung to, the opinions of that best school of Indian statesmanship of which he lived to be one of the greatest teachers. He was only a subaltern in a Sepoy regiment when he wrote : “ An invariable rule ought to be observed by all Europeans who have connexions with the natives of India—never to practise any art or indirect method of gaining their end, and, from the greatest occasion to the most trifling, to keep sacred their word. This is not only their best but their wisest policy. By this conduct they will observe a constant superiority in all their transactions ; but when they act a different part—when they condescend to meet the smooth-tongued Mahomedan or the crafty Hindoo with the weapons of flattery, dissimulation, and cunning, they will of a certainty be vanquished.”

I have said that it was John Malcolm’s great ambition to obtain an appointment in the Political Department. After a while, he thought that he saw an opening. A subordinate post was vacant ; he applied for it, and was just half an hour too late. It had been bestowed upon another young officer. His disappointment and vexation were great. He went back to his tent, flung himself down on his couch, and gave way to a flood of tears. But he lived, as many a man before and since has lived, to see in his first crushing miscarriage the crowning mercy of his life. The officer who carried off the prize so coveted by John Malcolm, went straight to his death. On his first appearance at the Native Court, at which he was appointed an assistant to the Resident, he was murdered. This made a deep impression at the time on Malcolm’s mind, and was ever afterwards gratefully remembered. He often spoke of it in later days, as an illustration of the little that man knows of what is really for his good, and he taught others, as he himself had learnt, never to repine at the accidents and mischances of life, but to see in all the hand of an all-merciful Providence working benignly for our good.

In God’s time, however, that which he sought came ; and John Malcolm received his first appointment. “ I served,” he wrote many years afterwards, “ as a regimental officer, with European and Native corps (without ever having one week’s

1792.
First staff
appointment.

leave of absence), for nine years. In 1792, when at Seringapatam, I was appointed Persian interpreter to the detachment serving with the Nizam, by the Marquis Cornwallis, on the express ground of being the officer with that corps best qualified for the station." His foot was now on the ladder of promotion; but, for a while, his upward progress was checked by the failure of his health. Continued exposure to the climate had done its sure work upon him; and he was compelled to return to England. He did not like it; but his friends persuaded him to take the advice of his physicians, and he consented, with less reluctance, perhaps, than he would otherwise have felt, because Sir John Kennaway, his friend and patron in the political service, was going home also, and proposed to take young Malcolm with him.

1792.

It was great joy to him, and great joy to others, when John Malcolm reappeared in Eskdale, a fine, handsome young man, Visit to
England 1791 reinvigorated by the voyage, with an unfailing supply of animal spirits, and an inexhaustible budget of amusing and instructive talk. Great days were those at Bunfoot, when John sat by the fire and told to the admiring family circle pleasant stories of all that he had seen and heard in the Far East. But, having a career before him, he was not one to protract his stay in England a day longer than was perfectly necessary for the restoration of his health, so he returned to India, and under happy auspices, for he went out as aide-de-camp to General (afterwards Sir Alured) Clarke, who had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army. On his way out they stopped at the Cape of Good Hope; found the English and Dutch at open war; and were present at the operations which ended in the transfer of the settlement to the English, by whom, save for a short interval, it has ever since been retained.

When, in the cold weather of 1795-96, John Malcolm again found himself at Madras, he was still a subaltern; but he was on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief. "I am well," he wrote to his mother, "and situated in every respect as I could wish. I am secretary to General Clarke, who is, without exception, one of the best men I ever knew. The employment is of that nature as to leave me hardly one idle moment—all the better you will say, and all the better *I* say." But this

1795-96.

Return to
India.

1795—96. did not last long. General Clarke was transferred to the chief command of the army in Bengal, and there were circumstances which prevented him from appointing John Malcolm to the military secretaryship in that Presidency. But though his old master was gone, the office which he had held was not lost to him also, for Sir Alured Clarke's successor invited Malcolm to remain as his Secretary and Interpreter. The Colonel Harris of the preceding Memoir, who had served on the Staff of General Medows, was now General Harris, Commander-in-Chief and temporarily Governor of Madras;* and he was glad to receive Malcolm into his house, and to welcome him as a member of his family.

In this situation John Malcolm was sufficiently happy; but the personal staff of a Commander-in-Chief, or even of a Governor, or Governor-General, afforded no great scope for the development of his powers, and he still longed for employment in the diplomatic line of the service. His next advancement, however, was in the military direction, for he was appointed Town-Major of Madras—in those days, an honourable and a lucrative office. But his hopes were about speedily to be realised, in a manner wholly unexpected. Lord Wellesley—then Lord Mornington—went out to India as Governor-General, and, on his way to Calcutta, touched at Madras. There he made the acquaintance of John Malcolm, by that time a captain in the army, who sent his Lordship some reports which he had drawn up, on our relations with the native states of India, especially the state of Hyderabad in the Deccan. The result was, that soon after his arrival in Bengal, the Governor-General offered him an appointment as assistant to the Resident at the Nizam's Court; so, without loss of time, Captain Malcolm proceeded to the chief city of the Deccan, and was soon in the thick of an exciting political contest.

Political em-
ployment.

At the Court of Hyderabad the French had for some time been making effectual progress. French officers had disciplined, and now commanded, several battalions of the Nizam's troops.

* Colonel Harris had gone home with Sir William Medows at the end of the first Mysore war, but had returned to India at the end of 1794 to rejoin his regiment in Calcutta. Soon afterwards he was appointed commandant of Fort

William, but lost his command on promotion to the rank of Major-General. He was about to return home, when he received an intimation that he had been appointed Commander-in-Chief at Madras.

1798.

“Assignments of territory,” it has been said, “had been made for their payment. Foundries were established under competent European superintendence. Guns were cast. Muskets were manufactured. Admirably disciplined and equipped, Raymond’s levies went out to battle with the colours of revolutionary France floating above them, and the Cap of Liberty engraved on their buttons.” Such a state of things could not be suffered to endure, on the eve of a great war with Tippoo; so Lord Wellesley determined to make a bold stroke for the destruction of the French force at Hyderabad. The consent of the Nizam was obtained; but it was still necessary to do it by a *coup d'état*, for which the British must be responsible. There was a considerable body of British troops at no great distance from the Residency, and with these Kirkpatrick, the Resident, and his assistant, Malcolm, determined to accomplish their object. Fortunately, it happened that at the critical moment the troops were mutinying against their officers, because they were in arrears of pay, and had made a prisoner of their French commandant. Malcolm was sent down to allay the tumult; but the crowd would not listen to him. They said that they would treat him as they had treated their own officers. And they were about to lay violent hands upon him, when some Sepoys of the French battalion, who had formerly been in the Company’s Army, and served in John Malcolm’s regiment, recognised him, and remembering many old kindnesses done to them by their English officer, went at once to the rescue. They lifted him up above the crowd, and bore him on their heads to a place of safety, out of the reach of the exasperated mob of mutinous Sepoys.

How the French corps was afterwards dispersed, without the shedding of a drop of blood, is a matter of history, on which, however interesting, I cannot afford to enlarge. It was Malcolm’s first great lesson in the stirring business of that “political department,” whose concerns often savour more of war than of diplomacy, and are more peril-laden than the fiercest conflicts in the field. But the Governor-General had summoned him to Calcutta; and, the French corps dispersed, he set out with all possible speed to join the Vice-Regal Court in the great City of Palaces. He carried with him, as a palpable embodiment of success, the colours of the annihilated

1798-99. French battalions. At the capital, he was warmly welcomed. The Governor-General—no mean judge of character—saw at once that he was a man to be trusted and to be employed. In truth, this meeting with Lord Wellesley was the turning-point of John Malcolm's career. From that day his future was made. He found in the Governor-General a statesman after his own heart; and Lord Wellesley listened attentively to all that was said by the political assistant, because he found in John Malcolm's ready words fit and forcible expression of the opinions which were taking shape in his mind.

The Mysore
wall

Eager for action, the young Governor-General, on his first arrival in India, had contemplated the immediate renewal of the war with Tippoo, and had directed the authorities of Madras at once to commence hostilities. Mr. Webbe, whom the Duke of Wellington afterwards described as one of the ablest and honestest men he ever knew, was Chief Secretary. He knew what were the resources of the Government better than any man in the country; he knew that there was an empty treasury and an army on a peace establishment; and he was so startled by the announcement that the Governor-General purposed at once to plunge into war with so powerful an enemy as Tippoo, that he declared he could see nothing in the prospect but the most shocking disasters to our arms and the impeachment of Lord Mornington for his temerity. General Harris, with the true instinct of the soldier, prepared at once to obey orders, and said that he would use his own funds for the purpose, to the last rupee, if there was no money in the Treasury. But he strongly protested against the immediate commencement of hostilities, as something hazardous in the extreme; and the Governor-General had consented to pause. There was then a season of active preparation; and when Malcolm reached Calcutta, he learnt that there was no thought of further delay. The disarming of the French corps at Hyderabad had removed not the least of our difficulties, for there was hope now of effective assistance from the Nizam. The want of money had been a grievous stumbling-block; but what the public treasury could not supply, private patriotism and liberality readily advanced. The Governor-General set the example by subscribing a lakh and twenty thousand rupees towards a new loan—an example which was

nobly followed by a large number of European and native money-holders ; and so, from private sources, within a short time, a considerable sum was raised to defray the expenses of the war. Thus treasure was found. Stores of all kinds had been collected ; carriage had been drawn from every part of the country ; and the scattered components of the Coast Army gathered into one effective whole, well organised, well equipped, and well commanded.

The time had now come when the personal presence of the Governor-General at Madras was needed, either to negotiate peace or to expedite war ; so at the end of the year, Lord Mornington, accompanied by Malcolm and others, sailed for Madras to meet the new Governor, Lord Clive, and to take counsel with him and the Commander-in-Chief. He found those two authorities acting zealously and harmoniously together. He had great confidence in Harris, and he at once offered him the command of the expedition. But, with rare modesty, the General mistrusting his own powers, suggested the expediency of placing the chief conduct of operations in the more experienced hands of Sir Alured Clarke. The Governor-General recommended him not hastily to decline a command which might lead him to fame and fortune, but to take a night to consider well, and to weigh against each other, all the consequences of the acceptance or rejection of such an offer, and to announce his decision on the morrow. On the following morning, when he went in to Lord Mornington, the cheerfulness of his countenance rendered words unnecessary, and, before he had spoken, the Governor-General had congratulated Harris on his decision, and commended his wisdom in accepting the command.*

For Malcolm himself, employment had been marked out, and of a kind to demand all his energies. He was appointed to accompany the Hyderabad troops, which, in accordance with our engagements with the Nizam, were to co-operate with the British Army in the invasion of Mysore and the assault of Seringapatam. In effect, this political superintendence was little less than the military command of the Nizam's force, and he hastened to join the Head-quarters of the Allies, assured that there was stirring work before them.

* Lushington's Life of Harris

1799. It was no easy matter to enforce discipline among a body of Sepoys, large numbers of whom had belonged to the old French corps; so Malcolm was not surprised that one of his first duties was to quell a dangerous mutiny that threatened to turn the Nizam's army into a vast rabble. He accomplished this hazardous work with a mixture of courage and address, which won the admiration of the Nizam's commander, Meer Allum, and of another far greater man. The British subsidiary force, which had marched at the same time from Hyderabad, had consisted wholly of Company's Sepoys. But afterwards it was considered advisable to attach an European regiment to this force, and his Majesty's 33rd Regiment, then stationed at Vellore, was selected for this duty. The regiment was commanded by Colonel the Honourable Arthur Wellesley, brother of the Governor-General, who took command of the whole force; and the friendship which then commenced between Colonel Wellesley and Captain Malcolm endured, without intermission, until, nearly thirty-five years afterwards, the Duke of Wellington mourned, with all the tenderness of his heart, the death of his old comrade, General Sir John Malcolm.

The Head-quarters of the Army were fixed at Vellore; and on the 29th of January, General Harris assumed command. The season was far advanced for the commencement of such an expedition, and he could not contemplate the work before him without some gloomy forebodings. The disastrous retreat of the army under Lord Cornwallis some eight years before—a calamity of which the General had been a witness and a partaker—recurred forcibly to his recollection; the evil consequences of a scarcity of carriage and provisions in the enemy's country were ever present to his mind; and he steadfastly resolved that nothing should draw him aside from the main object of his expedition—nothing induce him to waste his time and his resources on the march to Scringapatam. It was his fixed resolve to march straight upon the capital, never pausing, unless compelled by the positive opposition of Tippoo's army intercepting his line of march, to strike a single blow by the way. To this resolution he steadily adhered. The army commenced its march. It was a splendid force. “The army of the Carnatic,” wrote Lord Mornington

1799.

to General Harris, “is unquestionably the best appointed, the most completely equipped, the most amply and liberally supplied, the most perfect in point of discipline, and the most fortunate in the acknowledged experience and abilities of its officers in every department, which ever took the field in India.” On the 6th of March this fine army, accompanied by the Nizam’s contingent, which Malcolm had hurried forward with surprising rapidity, had crossed the frontier of Tippoo’s dominions, and on the following morning it commenced its march upon Seringapatam.

On the 4th of April, the British Army were encamped in sight of the celebrated stronghold of Tippoo Sultan. The march had been a difficult and a distressing one. The cattle attached to the army of the Carnatic had died off by scores. The loss of carriage had necessarily been attended by a considerable loss of commissariat and ordnance stores ; and there being no possibility, in the heart of the enemy’s country, of obtaining fresh cattle to supply the place of those which had fallen dead by the wayside, it was at one time feared that the European soldiers would be necessitated to take the place of the draft bullocks, and drag the heavy ordnance along the remainder of the way to Seringapatam. Fortunately, however, Tippoo in the first instance had come to the determination of attacking the auxiliary force advancing from the Bombay side ; and it was not until the 27th of March that the grand army under General Harris was engaged with the enemy. This engagement took place at Malavelly, whither Tippoo had despatched a force to intercept the progress of the British, and was the precursor of a career of victory. Tippoo’s troops, after much hard fighting, and a fine display of British generalship, were dispersed ; but the British force was not in a condition to follow up the success, by a pursuit of the enemy, whose loss in the affair is, however, estimated at two thousand. On the following day, General Harris steadily continued his march towards the banks of the Cavery, and halted at Angarapooram. Here he came to the resolution of abandoning the direct road, and crossing the river near Soosilly, so as to attack the western front of Seringapatam, and at the same time facilitate the junction with the Bombay troops. This masterly project was put into execution, and

1799. crowned with complete success. Whilst Tippoo was looking for the advance of the British along the direct road to Seringapatam which had been taken by Lord Cornwallis, the British troops were crossing the Cavery and encamping near the fort of Soosilly. When the Sultan discovered that he had been so completely out-generaled, he was filled with alarm and despair. Summoning his principal officers, he exclaimed, “We have arrived at our last stage—what now are we to do? What is your determination?” They all replied that they would die with him.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the delight and gratitude of General Harris on finding himself, with his fine army and splendid battering train, under the walls of Seringapatam. The march had been long and hazardous; the *impedimenta* of the expedition far more cumbrous than any that had ever accompanied an Anglo-Indian Army in the field. An untoward check might at any hour have baffled all the plans of the British Government, and sent back this immense army to the point from which it started, after enduring all the misery of a long, disastrous, and discreditable retreat. It was necessary that the force should reach Seringapatam within a certain time; an obstruction of a few weeks would have rendered it impossible for any human combination of energy and skill to bring the war to a successful termination. Had the march of General Harris been lengthened out until the setting in of the monsoon, he must have retired, *re infectâ*, across the confines of the Company’s dominions. But now the proud heights of that renowned fortress, from which Tippoo had so long snorted defiance at the British Government, rose up before the eyes of the delighted commander. There was great work for him to do, and, under Providence, he felt equal to its accomplishment.

On the 4th of May all was ready for the assault. The storming party had been told off, and the hour fixed for their advance had nearly arrived, when Malcolm entered the tent of the Commander-in-Chief. The General was sitting alone, very gravely pondering the important work before him and the great interests at stake. “Why, my Lord, so thoughtful?” cried Malcolm, congratulating him, by anticipation, on the peerage within his reach. The lightness of his tone was not

1799.

pleasing to the overburdened General, who answered sternly, "Malcolm, this is no time for compliments. We have serious work in hand ; don't you see that the European sentry over my tent is so weak from want of food and exhaustion, that a Sepoy could push him down ? We must take this fort, or perish in the attempt. I have ordered General Baird to persevere in his attack to the last extremity. If he is beaten off, Wellesley is to proceed with the troops from the trenches. If he should not succeed, I shall put myself at the head of the remainder of the army ; for success is necessary to our existence."*

Malcolm never doubted for a moment that the issue of that day's conflict would be a crowning victory to our British Army. But the result was even greater than he anticipated. Seringapatam was carried by assault ; Mysore lay prostrate at the feet of the Allies ; and all that was left of Tippoo Sultaun was found in a gateway among a heap of slain. It was but the simple language of truth which Malcolm employed when he wrote to Lord Hobart, saying : "On the 4th of May all our labours were crowned by the completest victory that ever crowned the British annals in India. A state that had been the rival of the Company for nearly thirty years was on that day wholly annihilated." The great Mahomedan usurpation of Southern India had thus suddenly collapsed in a day ; and the country governed by the usurper became by right of conquest the property of the Allies. It might then have been divided between the British Government and the Nizam ; but the Governor-General, then only in his novitiate, and not unmindful, perhaps, in that early stage of his career, of the prohibitory clauses in the Act of 1793, by which the Parliament of Great Britain vainly endeavoured to stem the tide of Indian conquest, shrank from so great an extension of empire as the appropriation of the whole of the conquered country by the Allies would have entailed upon the British Government. Perhaps, too, there may have been, as the very natural growth of the violence of the French Revolution, some sentiments, in English breasts, in favour of legitimacy, and that the hard fate of the wretched Bourbons of Mysore

* Lushington's Life of Lord Harris. was narrated to him by Sir John Mal-Mi Lushington says that this story cuhn in 1813

1799.

might have excited the sympathies of our English statesmen in India. But whether it were mere policy, or whether there were blended with it any sense of justice, or any feeling of compassion, it was decreed that a large portion of the conquered country should be erected into a new Hindoo principality, under the government of a descendant of the old Rajahs of Mysore. A descendant was found—a mere child; and his legitimacy was acknowledged. So the British took a slice of the conquered country; the Nizam took another slice; and each Government surrendered a great part of its share of the territorial spoil to establish the new Hindoo kingdom of Mysore. On a given day, Colonel Kirkpatrick, as the representative of the British Government, and Meer Allum, as the representative of the Nizam, each taking one hand of the boy-prince, placed him upon the *guddee*; and, as I write, the aged Maharajah is the only actor in that scene who now survives.

The arrangement thus briefly described was wrought into enduring shape by a Commission, of which John Malcolm was one of the secretaries. His associate was Thomas Munro, who rose afterwards to the highest seat in the Government of Madras, and for whom Malcolm ever entertained both the warmest affection and the highest respect.* The members of the Commission were General Harris, the two brothers of the Governor-General, Arthur and Henry Wellesley, Colonel Kirkpatrick, and Colonel Barry Close. The Commission was in work only for a single month, in continual communication with the Governor-General, who tarried at Madras; but in that space two treaties were negotiated, which placed the division of the conquered country, and the provision to be made for Tippoo's family, upon a footing so permanent, that up to the present time the results of that May-day fighting have never ceased to be an ever-recurring source of trouble and perplexity to the Governments of India at home and abroad. There are no documents to which more frequent references are made than to the Partition and Subsidiary treaties of Mysore.

* Sir Thomas Munro was so emphatically a "representative man," that I should have included him in this series of biographies, if my friend the Chap-

lain-General had not so entirely exhausted the subject—so pleasantly and so instructively—as to leave me nothing new to say about his hero.

1799.

When the Subsidiary Treaty had been concluded, the Commission was dissolved. Malcolm had done his duty so well—indeed, he had altogether so strongly recommended himself, by his good service, to the Governor-General—that Lord Mornington, when the work of the Commission was complete, offered him far higher employment. He selected him to proceed on a mission to the Persian Court. In those days, we knew little or nothing of that country. But Zemaun Shah, the Ruler of Afghanistan, had been suspected of intriguing with Tippoo and with the deposed Prince of Oude,¹ and we had visions of the French disporting in the background. The anti-Gallican tendencies of Lord Wellesley and of Captain Malcolm were equally strong, and the latter rejoiced all the more in the honourable appointment that had been offered to him, because there was a grand opportunity before him of check-mating France in the regions of Central Asia.[†]

At the end of the year 1799, Captain John Malcolm, being 1799—1800. then in his thirty-first year, sailed from Bombay to the First mission. Persian Gulf. After visiting Muscat, he steered for Bushire, where he landed, and made his preparations to advance into the interior of the country. This, however, was not very easily accomplished, for he was continually being arrested by absurd formalities, at which he laughed with the utmost possible good humour; but, at the same time, maintained the dignity of the great nation which he represented, by demanding from the Persian Government all the respect which he yielded on the part of his own. But he did not wrap himself up in his diplomacy. He was ever an enthusiast in the acquisition of knowledge; and he lost no possible opportunity of adding to his stores. From Shiraz, he wrote to his friend Mr. Edmonstone, then Persian Secretary to Government, who was making rapid strides towards the attainment of the eminent position which he so long held in the Councils of India: “I employ every leisure hour in researches into the history of this extraordinary country, with which we are but

* Vizier Ali.

† Malcolm described the object of the mission in these words “To relieve India from the annual alarm of Zemaun Shah’s invasion, which is always attended with serious expense to the Company, by occasioning a diversion upon

his Persian provinces; to counteract the possible attempts of those villainous but active democrats the French; to restore to some part of its former prosperity a trade which has been in a great degree lost—are the leading objects of my journey.”

1800. little acquainted. Of the little information we have received respecting its ancient history from the Greeks, you will form an idea when I assure you that, with the exception of Alexander's conquests, which are related by the authors of both countries (though in a very different manner), there is no fact recorded by the Greeks of which Persian histories make the least mention, nor is there one name that the Greeks have given to either the Persian Generals or Towns that can be understood by any Persian. Indeed, there are many so foreign to the idiom of the language, that he cannot pronounce them when repeated. I shall, I trust, collect materials that will either enable myself, or some one better qualified, to give much information on this subject. The climate of this country is delightful. Had it the constitution of Great Britain, its inhabitants need not sigh for Paradise. As it is, I would rather live on Douglan Hill." From Ispahan, he again wrote, on the 9th of October, to the same correspondent, that the mission was prospering. "All goes on swimmingly," he said. "Attention increases as I advance. The entertainment given me yesterday by the Begler Bey exceeds all I have yet seen. The illuminations and fireworks were very grand; and, to crown all, when we were seated in an elegant apartment, one side of it, which was chiefly formed of mirrors, opened, and a supper laid out in the English style, with tables and chairs, presented itself to our utter astonishment, for we little expected such apparatus in the middle of Persia. The difficulty of feasting us in our own style made the compliment the greater."

Treaty-
negotiations

On the 16th of November Malcolm was presented to the Shah at Teheran. Some days afterwards he laid before his Majesty the magnificent presents with which he was charged. But he was in no hurry to enter upon the political business of his mission. He exhibited his diplomacy by leading on the Persian Ministers to make their proposals for the establishment of treaty-negotiations between the two powers. The result was, that after a good deal of skirmishing, two treaties, the one commercial, the other political, were drawn up and discussed. There was little need now to make a grand combination against Zemau'n Shah, for in truth that unhappy ruler, who had threatened such great things, was, in a political sense, very nearly at his last

gasp. But very potent were the French ; so, after disposing of the Afghans, the treaty ruled that if any people of the former nation should endeavour to effect a landing on Persian territory, the Persians and English together should make short work of them ; and that the King of Persia would never allow the French, or any European power in alliance with them, to build a fort or to settle in any part of the Persian dominions. Whether these treaties were ever really in force is matter of historical doubt. But at all events a good understanding was established between the two countries. The Persians were well pleased with the magnificence of the presents which were lavished upon them ; they derived from them a grand idea of our national wealth ; and it must be added that the personal belongings of the Envoy himself made a profound impression on the Persian Court. His fine stature, his commanding presence, and the mixture of good humour and of resolute prowess with which he conducted all his negotiations, compelled them to form a high estimate of the English people. He was in their eyes a “Roostum,” or hero of the first magnitude.

On his return to India, Captain John Malcolm was greeted by letters from the Governor-General, directing him to proceed at once to Calcutta.* His reception at Government House was most cordial. Lord Wellesley bestowed his unqualified commendation on what had been done, and promised to give him, on the first opportunity, a high appointment in the political service. Meanwhile, he requested him to act as his private secretary, during the absence of Henry Wellesley, who had gone on a special mission to Oude. All this, it may well be conceived, filled with delight and gratitude the hearts

Visit to
Calcutta

* Or rather from Henry Wellesley, the brother and private secretary of the Governor-General, who wrote. “While I was in England, I frequently heard Mr. Dundas and other great men speak of you in a manner which gave me great pleasure, and ought not to be less gratifying to you. . . . All wise people in India think that very satisfactory consequences are likely to result from your embassy. There are not wanting some who are disposed to blame it, as tending to give umbrage to the Court of St. Petersburg, but these are of that description of person who never look at a

measure but with a view of condemning it” . . . And then in a postscript came the important words “My brother” (Lord Wellesley), “hearing I was writing to you, has this moment desired me to summon you to the Presence.” A later letter from the same writer conveyed to him the gratifying intelligence of the full approval of the Governor-General “I cannot help writing to tell you,” he said, “that my brother fully approves of all your proceedings, and that he thinks you have conducted the whole of your negotiations in a very masterly manner”

1801—1802. of the family at Burnfoot. “The account of your employments,” wrote his father to him, “is like fairy tales to us. . . . Your filial effusions brought tears of joy to the eyes of your parents. A good head will gain you the esteem and applause of the world, but a good heart alone gives happiness to the owner of it. It is a continual feast.”

Special mis-sions.

In the capacity of private secretary, John Malcolm accompanied Lord Wellesley on a tour to the Upper Provinces; but he had not proceeded farther than Allahabad, when certain complications of a personal character at Madras caused the Governor-General to depute Malcolm, on a mission of much delicacy, to that Presidency. He did his work not only well—but nobly. For the arrangements, which were considered good for the public service, involved a great sacrifice on *his* part. He had been promised the Residency of Mysore; but he yielded his claims with cheerfulness, in order to induce that excellent civil officer, Mr. Webb, to remain a little longer in India. This done, he returned with all possible despatch to Calcutta, and met the Governor-General on his way back to the Presidency. But he did not remain long at the great man’s elbow. Whenever any difficulty arose, it occurred to Lord Wellesley at once to send Malcolm on a special mission to set it right. So when, in July, 1802, the Persian Ambassador, who had come to India about the ratification of the treaties, was unhappily shot in an affray at Bombay, Malcolm was despatched to that Presidency to endeavour to make the best of so untoward an occurrence.

Making all speed, by land, to Bombay, he arrived there in October, and did everything that could be done to appease the expected resentment of the Persian Court. He wrote letters of explanation and condolence to the Shah and his Ministers; and made such liberal grants of money to all who had suffered by the mischance, that it was said afterwards in Persia that the English might kill a dozen Ambassadors, if they would always pay for them at the same rate. By the end of November the work was done, and Malcolm returned to Calcutta. He found the Governor-General and his advisers immersed in the troubled politics of the great Mahratta Courts. On New Year’s-day, 1803, he wrote to Colonel Kirkpatrick that “the line was taken.” He thought it no great matter to settle the business

of these troublesome chiefs, and he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, General Lake, that "one short campaign would for ever dissipate the terror with which Indian politicians in England are accustomed to contemplate the power of the Mahratta nation." That this was a mistake, he discovered in due course of time. Military operations were commenced, and as Malcolm was sure to be where any kind of activity was wanted, he was soon on his way to General Stuart's camp. Mr. Webbe having been transferred to the Residency of Nagpore, Malcolm—now Major Malcolm—had been appointed to Mysore, the Residency at which he had before yielded to the civilian. He went to Madras, therefore, formally to take up his appointment, and to communicate, on the part of Lord Wellesley, with the Governor of that Presidency. The work was soon done. On the 27th of February, 1803, he wrote to the Governor-General: "I propose leaving Madras in a few days, and, as I travel fast, I shall soon join the army, and convey to the (Madras) Commander-in-Chief, in the clearest manner I can, a correct idea of the conduct which, in your Excellency's judgment, the present emergency demands."

The head-quarters of the Madras Army were then at Hurryhur. To this place Malcolm proceeded post-haste, and after two days spent in camp, pushed forward to join the advance division, under General Arthur Wellesley, which was to aid, in the lower part of the Mahratta country, the operations which Lord Lake was conducting in the upper. On the 19th of March he joined Wellesley's camp, and there was a cordial meeting between the two friends, and little disposition on either side to part. Malcolm saw clearly that they could act well together for the good of the public service, and, as no evil was likely to arise from his absence from Mysore, he determined to remain in Wellesley's camp, and there to turn his diplomatic experience to good account. "A political agent," he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, "is never so likely to succeed as at the head of an army." It was a great epoch in the history of our Indian Empire, and there was a magnificent harvest of results. For a narrative of the events, which grew out of the Mahratta policy of Lord Wellesley, the inquiring reader must turn to the military annals of the time. It was enough, that the first great work which fell to the share of

1803.

The Mahratta
war.

1803. Wellesley and Malcolm was the restoration of the Peishwah, Badjee Rao, to the throne of Poonah. This accomplished, Malcolm fell sick. He struggled against his increasing infirmity—but in vain. The hot weather had come on, and he could not resist its baneful effects. “I am out of all temper with myself,” he wrote on the 26th of May, to Mr. Edmonstone, “at being unwell at a moment like the present. However, everything will soon terminate prosperously and gloriously.” A month later he was in Wellesley’s camp, “a little recovered;” but in July he was again struggling against physical weakness, and at last even his spirits began to fail him. “I feel incapable,” he wrote, “of holding out much longer in camp against an accumulation of such disorders.” And at last, in the middle of August, to his intense disappointment, he was compelled to yield to the solicitations of General Wellesley and other friends, and to quit the camp for Bombay just as active business in the field was commencing. What it cost him it is hard to say, for during his absence the great battle of Assye was fought and won; and it was long afterwards a thorn in his flesh to think that he had been absent from the side of his friend in such a glorious conjuncture.

But Malcolm was not long absent from his post. On the 16th of December he returned to camp, and was warmly welcomed. Though everything had gone well with the army, the aspect of social affairs about the General’s Staff, if not actually gloomy, was a little stately and solemn. It was all work and no play; and there was little laughter in the English tents. But when Malcolm reappeared among them, all this was changed. It was like a gleam of sunlight. He arrived in high spirits; he was overflowing with lively humorous talk; he had many rich stories to tell; he had a joke for every one, white or black; and no man left him without a smile upon his face. He was “Boy Malcolm” still. It was impossible to resist the fascinations of his genial presence. I do not know how the story can be told, better than in the words in which it was narrated to me, half a century afterwards, by Mountstuart Elphinstone:

Reminiscences of Mountstuart Elphinstone. “I joined,” wrote the veteran statesman, “the camp, as you suppose, immediately after the surrender of Ahmed-nuggur. I think Malcolm had gone before I arrived. I left camp on the 28th of December, three or four days before

1803.

the conclusion of the treaty. The negotiations had been going on for some time, but had not taken a definite shape till Wittul Rao, Scindiah's Prime Minister, came into camp, on the 23rd of December. Malcolm had arrived about a week before, and was present at all the conferences with him. He (Wittul Punt) was an elderly man, with rather a sour, supercilious countenance; but such as it was, he had a perfect command of it, receiving the most startling demand, or the most unexpected concession, without moving a muscle. Malcolm remarked on him that he never saw such a face for playing 'Brag.' The name stuck to him; for long afterwards, when Malcolm met the Duke in Europe, and was asking him about the great men of France, his answer about Talleyrand was, that he was a good deal like 'old Brag,' but not so clever. I do not remember any anecdotes about the proceedings, but I well remember the effect of Malcolm's arrival, in enlivening head-quarters life. There had been a great deal to do; everybody was busy in the daytime, and more or less tired at night. The General, when not on other duty, was shut up all day writing in his private tent, and was too much absorbed in the many things he had to attend to, to talk much at table, except when there was anything interesting to excite him; so that, although there was no form or ceremony in his party, there was not much vivacity. When Malcolm came, he pitched his tent (with two or three of his own people of the Mysore Residency) close to the line of the General's Staff, which soon presented a very different scene. His health seemed (for the time) completely restored, and he was in the highest possible spirits; just come among old friends from comparatively new places, with much to hear, and more to tell, and doing his business by snatches, so that he seemed to be always idle. He had frequent visitors at and after breakfast, when he remained talking to the company, showing off the Arab horses he had brought with him from Bombay, or regaling them with some of the beer or other rarity he had supplied himself with, and joking them about the starving condition in which he found them. When the strangers were gone, he went on with other subjects, but with the same flow of spirits; sometimes talking politics, sometimes chit-chat; sometimes reading political papers he had drawn up, and sometimes senti-

1803. mental or ludicrous verses of his own composition ; but ready at all times to receive any one—European or native—gravely or gaily, as the occasion required. To the natives, in particular, he used either to address elaborate compliments, or good-humoured jokes, as he thought best suited to their humour, and seldom failed to send them away pleased. Even bodily suffering did not take away his sociable feelings. When he was at his worst—at Poona, I think—and was exhausted and depressed, when a bachelor of thirty-four might have wished himself at the bottom of the sea, and any one else would have been solitary and morose, his exclamation was, ‘ Heigho ! I wish I had a wife and twelve children ! ’ ”

1804. His health, however, was not perfectly restored ; and he was still haunted by apprehensions of another break-down, necessitating his second departure from the camp. But there was much work to be done, and he struggled against his infirmity. The beginning of the year 1804 found him negotiating a treaty with Scindiah, the conclusion of which was delayed by a number of vexatious and frivolous obstructions, which, however, never disturbed the good humour of the negotiator. There were, indeed, occasional incidents to amuse him, by their absurdity ; and he was one ever thoroughly to appreciate such compensations. His first personal interview with Dowlut Rao Scindiah, then a youth, was enlivened by a curious accident. “ We were well received,” wrote Malcolm to General Wellesley, “ by the Maharajah, who is a good-looking young man. He preserved great gravity when we first went in ; and probably we might have left him without seeing that his gravity was affected, had not a ridiculous incident moved his muscles. A severe shower took place whilst we were in his tent. The water lodged on the flat part of the tent, under which Mr. Pepper was seated, and all at once burst in a torrent upon his head. From the midst of the torrent we heard a voice exclaim ‘ Jasus ! ’ —and soon after poor Pepper emerged. The Maharajah laughed loud, and we all joined chorus. A shower of hail followed the rain, and hailstones were brought in and presented in all quarters. My hands were soon filled with them by the politeness of Dowlut Rao and his Ministers ; and all began to eat, or rather to drink them. For ten minutes the scene more resembled a school at

The treaty with Scindiah.

the moment when the boys have got to play, than an Eastern Durbar.* We parted in great good humour ; and, as far as I can judge from physiognomy, every one in camp is rejoiced at the termination of hostilities."

1804.

Soon after this Scindiah fell sick, and when he recovered he was more inclined for pleasure than for business. A meeting had been arranged between him and Malcolm, which the former, having heard of a tiger some nine miles off, desired to postpone, and asked the Englishman to go out hunting with him. It was a sore denial to John Malcolm, ever a mighty huntsman, to be compelled to say that he was "afraid to venture in the sun." But he wrote to the young Maharajah that he would pray for his success, and, to ensure it, he sent the Prince his best rifle. He wrote this to General Wellesley on the 20th of February ; and a week afterwards he was in high spirits at the thought of having despatched a draft of the Treaty to Calcutta. Scindiah was equally pleased, and determined to celebrate the occasion by a frolic. "I am to deliver the Treaty to-day," wrote Malcolm to General Wellesley, "and after that ceremony is over to play *hooley*,† for which I have prepared an old coat and an old hat. Scindiah is furnished with an engine of great power, by which he can play upon a fellow fifty yards' distance. He has, besides, a magazine of syringes, so I expect to be well squirted." The sport was of a kind to delight "Boy Malcolm;" and we may be sure that he was not worsted in the playful encounter. But it did him no good. He was not strong enough for such rough work ; and he wrote afterwards to Merrick Shawe that the "cursed hooley play" had given him a sharp attack of fever.

But it was not all play-work for Malcolm at that time. Even whilst he was scattering the red powder, uneasy thoughts

* This incident greatly amused General Wellesley, who wrote an account of it to the Governor-General, in which he says: "It rained violently, and an officer of the escort, Mr Pepper, an Irishman (a nephew of old Bective's, by-the-by), sat under the flat of the tent, which received a great part of the rain which fell. At length it burst through the tent upon the head of Mr. Pepper, who was concealed by the torrent that fell, and was discovered after

some time by an 'Oh, Jasus' and a hideous yell. Scindiah laughed violently, as did all the others present, and the gravity and dignity of the Durbar degenerated into a *Malcolm riot* — after which they all parted on the best terms" — *Wellington Despatches*, vol. ii p. 701.

† This consists mainly of the interchange of civilities, by throwing red powder and squirting coloured water at everybody within one's reach.

1804. assailed him, for he was uncertain whether the treaties which he had negotiated would be approved by the Governor-General. For Lord Wellesley, though one not slow to express gratification when he felt it, was a man not easily pleased ; and, in those days, a negotiator cut off from the seat of Government by hundreds of slowly-traversed miles was altogether de-centralised and self-contained, and obliged to face responsibilities which in later times have been evaded by the help of the electric telegraph. It was Malcolm's doctrine, that "a man who flies from responsibility in public affairs is like a soldier who quits the rank in action ; he is certain of ignominy, and does not escape danger." He never did shrink from responsibility ; and, it may be added, that he was, for the most part, a man of a sanguine, confident, self-reliant nature, not commonly disposed to depreciate his own work or to predict failure. But he had at this time a treacherous liver ; he was melancholic and hypochondriacal, and unlike himself ; and everything that he saw before him had the tint of jaundice upon it. There were moral causes, also, to increase his depression, for he had just received from England the sad tidings of the death of his revered father. Moreover, he knew that at this time Lord Wellesley, stung by the opposition of the Court of Directors, and the probability of being deserted by the King's Ministers, was in a frame of mind more than usually irritable and captious, and hard to be pleased. Malcolm was in no wise, therefore, surprised to learn that some part of the Subsidiary Treaty was, on its first perusal, disapproved by Lord Wellesley. "I was fully aware," he wrote to Mr. Edmonstone, "when I was appointed to negotiate this treaty, of the heavy responsibility that I incurred ; and that responsibility was much increased by the uncertainty of communication with General Wellesley during the latter part of the negotiation—a circumstance which deprived me of the benefit of his instructions on several points on which I was anxious to receive them. I nevertheless ventured to conclude the treaty in the form it now has. The difference between it and engagements of a similar nature (which I knew Lord Wellesley had approved) did not appear to me of sufficient consequence to warrant my risking the success of the negotiation. As far as I could understand,

1804.

none of those principles which it is essential in such alliances to maintain were sacrificed, and no points were admitted that could operate injuriously to the interests of the British Government. I may, however, be mistaken, and there may be a thousand objections to the alliance even as it now stands, which my stupidity has made me overlook. If such is the case, it will, I conclude, be disapproved, and the treaty will not be ratified. On such an event occurring, the exclusive blame of this proceeding must attach to the agent employed to negotiate it, of whom it will be charitable to remark, that he was more distinguished for boldness and zeal than for prudence and judgment."

But fuller explanations, aided by a favouring course of circumstances, soon removed the uneasy apprehensions of Lord Wellesley; and a fortnight after he had written the above, Malcolm had the satisfaction of receiving letters from both the private and the political secretary of the Governor-General, informing him that his Lordship approved of all the stipulations of the treaties, and considered that he had "manifested great judgment, ability, and discretion in conducting the negotiations," and "rendered a public service of the highest description by the conclusion of the treaty of defensive and of subsidiary alliance." But this was emphatically Malcolm's *gurdee-ka-wukht*, or trouble-time, for he had still a depressing malady to cope with, and the burden of his sorrow was very heavy to bear. It seemed to him at the time as though the death of his father had taken away, if not his chief stimulus to exertion, at all events its main reward. And he wrote to his uncle, Mr. John Pasley, to whom he owed so much, saying: "The greatest enjoyment I have, from the acquisition of fame and honour, is in the satisfaction which my success in life affords to those to whom I owe my being, or, what is more, the principles of virtue and honesty, which I am conscious of possessing. The approbation of my conduct conveys to my mind more gratification than the thanks of millions or the applause of thousands; and as the number of those to whom I attach such value diminishes, a proportion of the reward I expected is taken away, and part of that stimulus which prompted me to action is removed. The sanguine temper of my dearest parent made him anticipate a

1804.

rank in life for me which I shall probably never attain ; but a knowledge that he indulged such expectations made me make every exertion of which I was capable. I am still sensible of what I owe to myself, to my friends, and to my country ; but I am no longer that enthusiast in the pursuit of reputation that I formerly was, and I begin to think that object may be attained at too dear a price. My mind has, perhaps, been more inclined to this way of thinking from the state of my health, which continues indifferent. However, as I have fully accomplished all the objects for which I was sent to this Court, I expect soon to be released, and to be enabled to repair to the sea-coast, where, I have no doubt, a short residence will make me as strong as ever.”*

The case of
Gwalior and
Gohud.

These personal distresses were soon blended with new official anxieties. The conclusion of the peace with Scindiah was attended with some political difficulties arising out of those territorial redistributions which so frequently result from our Indian wars. The most perplexing question of all was that which related to the disposal of the fort of Gwalior and the territory of Gohud. It was Malcolm’s opinion that, whatsoever might be the advantage to British interests in otherwise disposing of them, the surrender of both to Scindiah was clearly an act of justice. But it was soon manifest that the cession would be distasteful in the extreme to Lord Wellesley. Convinced that he was right, Malcolm took high ground. He said that nothing could shake his convictions—“first, because there is some room for doubt upon the subject, and if we determine a case of a disputable nature in our favour

* What follows must not be altogether omitted. It is so redolent of that good home-feeling, that tender regard for family ties, which is observable in the lives of most men who have risen to eminence in India. “I see from my last letters from Scotland that you were expected at Burnfoot in July. Your affectionate kindness will console my dearest mother, and make her more resigned to her great loss, and your presence will restore the whole family to happiness. Your own feelings, my dearest uncle, will reward you for such goodness ; may you long live to enjoy the gratitude and affection of a family who owe all their success and happiness to your kindness and protection ! I know not what arrangement you may think best for my mother and sisters. You are acquainted with my means. I have 10,000*l.* in my agent’s hands in this country, about 3000*l.* is due to me, which I shall hereafter receive. Of the amount in your hands I cannot speak, as I know not how much of it has been applied, but I have directed 400*l.* to be remitted annually, 300*l.* of which I meant for my parents, and 100*l.* for my sisters. You will now judge what is sufficient, and dispose of all, or any part of what I possess, as you think proper, above all, let my dearest mother enjoy affluence.”

1804.

because we have power, we shall give a blow to our faith that will, in my opinion, be more injurious to our interests than the loss of fifty provinces. What has taken us through this last war with such unexampled success? First, no doubt, the gallantry of our armies; but secondly—and hardly secondly—our reputation for good faith. These people do not understand the laws of nations, and it is impossible to make them comprehend a thousand refinements which are understood and practised in Europe. They will never be reconciled to the idea that a treaty should be negotiated upon one principle and fulfilled on another.”* Truer and better words have seldom been uttered by an Indian statesman; but I fear that, as warnings, they have been given to the winds. Sixty years have passed since they were written; but England has not yet ceased, in her dealings with India, to determine cases of a disputable nature in her own favour, or to negotiate treaties on one principle and to fulfil them on another.

I have said that Lord Wellesley, at this time, was in a very irritable state of mind. The abrasions which had been caused by constant collision with the “ignominious tyrants of Leaden-hall-street” were very sore; and he was sensitive in the extreme to any opposition which might have the effect of convincing his persecutors that the agents of his policy were more moderate than himself.† General Wellesley had said: “I declare that, when I view the treaty of peace and its con-

* Very similar words—words which have obtained far more extensive currency—were written by Arthur Wellesley. “I would sacrifice Gwalior,” he wrote to Malcolm, “or every frontier of India ten times over, in order to preserve our credit for scrupulous good faith and the advantages and honour we gained by the late war and peace, and we must not fritter them away in arguments drawn from overstrained principles of the laws of nations, which are not understood in this country. What brought me through many difficulties in the war and the negotiations of peace? The British good faith, and nothing else!” The two passages are so similar that a comparison of dates is interesting. Malcolm wrote from Boorhampore on March 30; Wellesley from Bombay on March 17, 1804.

† This is rendered very plain by a letter from Major Merick Shawe, Lord Wellesley’s secretary, in which he says “Whatever your motives may have been, your conduct has certainly placed Lord Wellesley in a very embarrassing situation, and, when that is the case, God knows that he is always inclined to vent his feelings freely against those who have occasioned him difficulty and trouble. Your having shown a great disposition to admit the justice of Scindiah’s right to Gwalior and Gohud, is likely, Lord Wellesley thinks, to give his enemies in Leadenhall-street room to found an accusation against Lord Wellesley of injustice and rapacity, in marching upon and retaining these possessions contrary to the opinion of the Resident.”

1804.

sequences, I am afraid it will be imagined that the moderation of the British Government in India has a strong resemblance to the ambition of other Governments.” And now Malcolm was turning against his master—very painfully and sorrowfully, but with a resolute manliness, which, whether he were right or wrong, is entitled to be held in respect as an example to the public service. I think that Malcolm was right.* If what he recommended was not more politic, it was at all events more generous, and indeed more just, than the opposite course. But the Governor-General was not a man to brook opposition of any kind, and for a while he withdrew his smiles from his favourite lieutenant. But all this soon passed away. Lord Wellesley wrote him a long and very friendly letter, assuring him of his unbroken confidence—telling him that he was at full liberty to return to Mysore, to join the government party in the upper provinces, to prepare for another mission to Persia, or to go home to recruit his health, as he might think best. “You may be assured,” wrote Lord Wellesley, “that,

* It must be admitted, however, that the case is not without its difficulties, and that something may be said on the other side. Fifty years afterwards, Mr. Elphinstone, writing to me on the subject, said: “I think Malcolm was quite right in the Gwalior controversy, but right or wrong, his strenuous opposition to the Governor-General in defence of what he thought the cause of justice and good faith, would have done honour to him in any circumstances, in those of the case, when the Governor-General was his patron, and the man for whom, above all others, he felt the sincerest admiration and devotion; it was an exertion of public virtue such as few men of the sternest character could have attained to. He knew very well that Lord Wellesley was at all times impatient of opposition and jealous of respect, and that at the time he was intoxicated with success, so that he must have foreseen all the consequences of his resistance, which were either an open rupture or a complete estrangement, till near the end of Lord Wellesley’s government, when there was a meeting at Calcutta, and a reconciliation, at which both parties seem to have been much affected, but of all this you will probably find better accounts than

I could give among your papers.”—*August 28, 1855* But two days after he had written this, Mr. Elphinstone wrote again to me, saying “I wrote to you on the day before yesterday that I thought Malcolm quite right in his difference with Lord Wellesley about Gwalior, but I have since looked at some of the papers regarding it, and find the case by no means so clear. I had no personal knowledge of the affair, and the merits of it depend a good deal on the dates and terms of engagements, and other circumstances not readily ascertained. But what shakes my confidence in my first opinion, is contained in the following papers, many of which I do not think I had before read.” (List of documents in Wellesley and Wellington correspondence given) “General Wellesley’s letter to Scindiah of May 20, 1804, in particular, expresses opinions so different from those given in his earlier letters to Malcolm, that it is impossible not to conclude that, on mature consideration, he had given up his first conclusions. But all this does not affect Malcolm’s claim to high respect for his independent and conscientious opposition to proceedings which he thought unjust.”—*August 30, 1855.*

1804.

although these discussions have given me great pain, they have not in any degree impaired my friendship and regard for you, or my general confidence and esteem. You cannot suppose that such transactions did not irritate me considerably at the unseasonable moment of their pressure. But you have already received from me suggestions of the same nature with those expressed in this letter, and you are aware of my aversion to every description of attack upon my judgment, excepting fair, distinct, direct argument. Reflecting on these observations, I entertain a confident expectation that you will always pursue that course of proceeding, in the discharge of the duties of friendship towards me, which you now know to be most congenial to my character and temper ; and I am satisfied that you will continue to possess the high place in my esteem and attachment to which you are so justly entitled by every consideration of gratitude and respect. I am extremely grieved to learn that your health has been so deeply affected. I trust, however, that the sea air and repose will entirely restore you. I leave you at liberty either to return to Mysore, or to join me in the Upper Provinces, or to prepare for another mission to Persia, or to prepare for Europe, as you may judge most advisable. I have apprised the Secret Committee of the probability of your return to Europe, and of my intention to employ you in communicating to them the details of the recent events in the Mahratta Empire. My own intention (although most secret) is to return to Europe in January or February next, provided the state of affairs in India should permit, which event now appears probable. In the mean while, I expect to depart for the Upper Provinces in about ten days, all my preparations being completed. You will act upon this information as you may judge best. I shall be happy to see you at Agra or Delhi, or to have your company to Europe. You may rest assured of my constant good wishes for your health and welfare.” And then he added, in a postscript, as though to make still clearer that there was to be no breach in their private friendship, these familiar words : “ General Wellesley has not told me whether he ever received the horse which I sent to him, or how that horse turned out ; somebody told me that he had suffered the same fate as ‘ Old Port,’ who was shot under General Lake at Laswarree.”

1804.
Visit to the
coast.

Malcolm's first duty was now to regain his health ; so, when he left Scindiah's camp, he went down to the coast, determined to cease for a while from business ; and before the autumn was far advanced he wrote from Vizagapatam that he was “ growing quite stout,” and that he “ enjoyed idling in perfection.” But news of stirring events came to him in his retreat. Scarcely had Scindiah's account been settled, when Holkar began to cause us fresh trouble ; and Malcolm then earnestly hoped to accompany General Wellesley again into the field. He had lost one grand opportunity of military distinction, and he panted to gain another. “ My health is now well restored,” he wrote from Ganjam in November, “ and two months of the cold weather will make me as strong as ever. Ingledew says, that by returning to camp I shall bring back the whole train of my complaints ; but I am not of his opinion, and, if I were, it should not prevent my accompanying the General to the field, if he will permit me. I feel (almost as a stain) my unfortunate absence from Assye and Argaum ; and I shall rejoice in the most distant prospect of attending the General on similar occasions.” But it was not so to be ; Arthur Wellesley's Indian career was at an end. The two friends met at Madras, and proceeded together to Mysore. But the General, who was about shortly to sail for England, soon returned to the Presidency, and Malcolm then settled himself down at Mysore, intending to turn his leisure to good account by writing the history of Persia, of which he had formed the design and collected some materials in that country.

But his studies were soon broken in upon by a summons to Calcutta. Lord Wellesley wished to see him at the chief Presidency ; so he closed his books, put aside his papers, and soon (April, 1805) found himself again an inmate of Government House. The Mahratta war had entered a new phase, and Malcolm's counsel was again in requisition. “ To make a long story short,” he wrote to General Wellesley, “ soon after you sailed I was called to Calcutta. I lost no time in obeying, and arrived on the 17th of April. I found it was determined that Close* should remain in the Deccan, where he was invested with the political and military control, and

* Colonel, afterwards Sir Barry, Close.

1825.

old man had thought to accomplish by a sudden blow what in the opinion of the highest authorities demanded the utmost deliberation and all the resources of scientific warfare. This indiscretion was his ruin. It was determined that he was not the man for the crisis ; and Metcalfe, therefore, was requested to proceed to Delhi and to take his place. “ Much as your services,” wrote Lord Amherst to him, “ are still demanded at Hyderabad, a nobler field opens for them in the scene of your former residence and employment, and I flatter myself that, unless there should be some impediment of which I am not aware to your proceeding to Delhi, you will readily afford your services in a quarter where they are now most urgently required, and where, I hesitate not to say, you can of all men in India most benefit your Government and your country.”

And, on the same day, his friend, Secretary Swinton, wrote to April 16, 1825. him, saying : “ To prevent any misconception on your part, I am directed to state to you distinctly that the question of Sir David Ochterlony’s retirement does not depend on your accepting or declining the proposal now made to you. If Government should be disappointed in its wish to avail itself of your services as his successor, it must then look to the next best man.” Metcalfe felt, and was afterwards fully assured, that if anything could reconcile Ochterlony to his removal from office, it would be the fact that Charles Metcalfe was to be his successor.*

So Metcalfe accepted the offer that was made to him ; but he did so with a heavy heart. “ I am out of spirits,” he wrote to one of his chosen friends, “ at the change in my prospects. I looked forward to the assemblage of all I love and a happy time during the rains—our labours in the country to be afterwards resumed. I cannot say that I shall be here for a month, as I must be prepared to start at a moment’s notice—then to leave all behind. I wish that I could take you all with me, and then, although I should still regret our desertion of the fate of this country, my personal regrets would be converted into joyful anticipations.” He said, in another letter, that he “ wished he could have been allowed to rest in peace in the quarter that had become the home of his

* Ochterlony did not live to see his successor installed. He died, broken-hearted, before Metcalfe reached Delhi.

1825

heart." He was enabled, however, to take one of his beloved friends* with him to Delhi ; and two others afterwards followed him to that place.

When Metcalfe left Hyderabad, he was Sir Charles Metcalfe, Baronet. His elder brother Theophilus had died, two or three years before, in England, leaving only a daughter ; so the title and the paternal estate of Fern Hill, in Berkshire, had passed to the second son of Sir Thomas Metcalfe. The change was a very distressing one to him, for he was fondly attached to his brother. It is by this designation of "Sir Charles Metcalfe" that he is best known to history and to the world ; and India claims him by no other.

Bhurtpore

I do not purpose to write in detail of the siege and capture of Bhurtpore, or of the events which preceded it. It is sufficient to state that on the 16th of September a formal resolution was passed by the Government of India, declaring that, "impressed with a full conviction that the existing disturbance at Bhurtpore, if not speedily quieted, would produce general commotion and interruption of the public tranquillity in Upper India, and feeling convinced that it was their solemn duty, no less than their right, as the paramount power and conservators of the general peace, to interfere for the prevention of these evils, and that these evils would be best prevented by the maintenance of the succession of the rightful heir to the Raj of Bhurtpore, whilst such a course would be in strict consistency with the uniform practice and policy of the British Government in all analogous cases, the Governor-General in Council resolved that authority be conveyed to Sir C. T. Metcalfe to accomplish the above objects, if practicable, by expostulation and remonstrance, and, should these fail, by a resort to measures of force." The issues of peace or war were thus placed in his hands. The responsibility cast upon him was great ; but no such burden ever oppressed or disquieted him. He knew that there was small chance of expostulation and remonstrance availing in that conjuncture ; but he knew also that there was a noble army, under an experienced commander, prepared to march upon Bhurtpore, and he saw clearly the advantages of victorious operations against such a place, at a

* John Sutherland, afterwards Colonel Sutherland, one of our most distinguished political officers.

1825.

time when our dubious successes in Burmah were being exaggerated by native rumour into defeats. He did his best to obtain the desired results by diplomacy ; but, perhaps, he was not sorry to fail. The letters which he addressed to the recusant chiefs were said, by the Government party in Calcutta, to be "models of correspondence;" and there the uses of the letters began and ended. They elicited only unmeaning and evasive answers ; and so a proclamation of war was issued, and the word was given for the advance of the army on Bhurpore.

On the 6th of December, Sir Charles Metcalfe joined the camp of the Commander-in-Chief. On the 10th the Army was before the celebrated Jat fortress. With the deepest interest did the civilian watch the progress of the siege. Years had not subdued his military ardour, but they had brought him increased military experience. For twenty years he had been studying our military policy in India, and speculating on the causes of our successes and our failures. No man had written more emphatically against that arrogant fatuity which so often displays itself in the conduct of difficult and hazardous operations with insufficient means ; no man had urged upon the Government more convincingly the wisdom of securing success by the employment of that irresistible combination of science and force which a great European power can always bring against an Asiatic enemy. And now, although fortified at the outset by the knowledge that the army which had advanced against Bhurpore was sufficiently strong in numbers, that it was adequately equipped with Artillery, and that some of the best Engineer officers in India were in camp, he began to doubt, as the siege advanced, whether too much would not, after the old fashion, be left to chance. "We are not getting on here as I like," he wrote on the 6th of January. "At one time we were, and I had great hopes that the place would be taken scientifically, without risk or loss. I have now no such expectation. We are to storm soon, and with the usual uncertainty. We may succeed, and I hope that we shall ; but we may fail, and whether we succeed or fail will depend upon chance. The business will not be made so secure as I thought it would be, and as I conceive it ought to be. What we have brought together our large means for I do not understand, if

1826.

1826.

risk is to be incurred at the end of our operations. It would have been better tried at the beginning. We might have taken the place in the first hour,* and we may take it now. But much as I shall rue it, I shall not be surprised if we fail. It staggers my opinion to find General Nicolls confident, but I cannot surrender my judgment even to his on this point absolutely, and I remain anxious and nervous. My opinion will not be altered by success, for I shall still consider it as the work of chance. We ought not to leave anything to chance, and we are doing it with regard to everything. Either our boasted science is unavailable or unavailing against Indian fortifications, or we are now about to throw away our advantage. I shudder both for Nicolls and for Sutherland. The former, I think, may perish in carrying on his difficult attack, and the ardour of the latter will carry him into unnecessary danger. God preserve them both, and save us from the not improbable consequences of our folly. You will have good news or bad very soon."

I do not know whether Sir Charles Metcalfe, who was in frequent communication with Lord Combermere, expressed these anxieties to the military chief, but on that same day the idea of an immediate assault was abandoned.† The breaching-batteries had not opened Bhurtpore sufficiently to admit the storming columns with good hope of success, so it was determined to ensure victory by mining. The attack was, therefore, delayed for a further period of twelve days. "We stormed on the 18th," wrote Metcalfe, a few days afterwards. "It was a glorious affair, and our success was most complete. Complete as our success has been, we have had a narrow escape from a most disastrous defeat. We can now see that neither the right breach nor the left, both made by battering, was practicable. Our first mines were bungling, but the latter were very grand. That to the right did a great deal of mischief to ourselves; for the people assembling in the trenches were too near, and the explosion of the mine took

* This was said of Sebastopol in 1855, and of Delhi in 1857.

† In the "Life of Lord Combermere," by Lady Combermere and Captain Knollys, there is a letter from the Commander-in-Chief to the Governor-

General, dated January 11, which says: "It having been ascertained that the batteries were not sufficient effectually to break the walls, a mine was commenced on the evening of the 6th," &c. &c.

1826.

effect outwards. It was a grand sight, and was immediately followed by that of the advance of the storming columns up the two great breaches. That on the left advanced first on the signal of the explosion of the mine, and that on the right immediately afterwards. Both mounted the breaches steadily, and as quickly as the loose earth and steepness of the ascent would admit, and attained the summit without opposition. It was a most animating spectacle." All this is mere history ; but it is history written by Metcalfe, who saw the events which are here described. He accompanied the Commander-in-Chief into one of the breaches, but, thinking that he could better see what was going on from another position, he had separated himself from Lord Combermere. Soon after this there was an explosion, from which the chief had a very narrow escape. "I congratulate myself," wrote Metcalfe, "for many about the Commander-in-Chief were killed or bruised by the explosion of our mine, and his own escape was surprising."

So Bhurpore was taken ; and Metcalfe, when the work of war was at an end, placed upon the throne the boy-Prince whom his usurping uncle had endeavoured to thrust out from his rightful inheritance. The usurper was sent, a prisoner, to Allahabad. There was then some further work to be done in the principality of Ulwur, but it did not give much trouble, and Metcalfe returned to Delhi. Public affairs had gone prosperously with him ; but in those which were much nearer and dearer to his heart there had been a fatality of the most distressing character. Within a short space he lost two of his most beloved friends. The first was Captain Barnett ; the second was Mr. Richard Wells, a young member of the Bengal Civil Service, who had followed him from Hyderabad, and had been appointed an assistant at Delhi. These calamities cut him to the heart. " You will have heard long before this," he wrote to Major Moore, then secretary to the Hyderabad Residency, " of the second blow which, in a short space, it has pleased Almighty God to inflict upon us. One brief month included to us here the death of both Barnett and Wells. . . . We have been thoroughly wretched. The world is fast receding from me ; for what is the world without the friends of our heart ? You remember the three friends with whom I

1826. arrived at Hyderabad in 1820—Barnett, Wells, Mackenzie. I loved them all cordially. Where are they now? I cannot write on the subject. But I can hardly think of any other." In another letter, speaking of the death of Richard Wells, he said that he could hardly believe that the anguish of the desolated widow could be greater than his. "Were I to hear at this moment," he added, "of my nomination to be Governor-General of India or Prime Minister of England, I am sure that the intelligence would create no sensation but disgust." Ambition was ever heavy within him, but it was light in the balance against the great wealth of affection garnered in that warm human heart.

1827.
Supreme
Council.

He had now fairly earned a seat in the Supreme Council, and in 1827 it was conferred upon him. He then took up his residence in Calcutta, and was the most hospitable and the most popular of men. In those days the Supreme Council consisted of the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief, and two members of the covenanting Civil Service. Lord Amherst and Lord Combermere still held office. The civilian colleague, who welcomed Metcalfe to the Presidency, was his old friend, Mr. Butterworth Bayley—a man whom to know was to reverence and to love. He had risen to high office after a career of nearly thirty years of good service, chiefly in the unostentatious paths of the judicial department. His life had been a far less stirring one than Metcalfe's; but he had done his own particular work so well that few men bore a higher official reputation, whilst his unfailing kindness of heart and suavity of manner endeared him to all who had the privilege of coming within the reach of their genial influences. There was not one of his contemporaries, perhaps, whom Metcalfe would sooner have found at the Board, nor one with whom he was likely to act more amicably in Council, notwithstanding occasional divergences of opinion.

Sir John Malcolm, who was then Governor of Bombay, wrote to Sir Charles Metcalfe, saying, "If you are my *beau idéal* of a good councillor, you content yourself with reading what comes before you, and writing a full minute now and then, when the subject merits it; and do not fret yourself and

1827-28.

perplex others by making much of small matters. Supposing this to be the case, you must have leisure, and if I find you have, I must now and then intrude upon it." But Metcalfe complained bitterly of the want of leisure. His life was a great conflict with Time. "My days," he wrote to a friend, "are portioned as much as possible, so as to enable me to do everything that I have to do, but in vain. Thursday and Friday are appropriated to Council, and nothing else can be done upon those days. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday are wholly devoted to the reading of papers that come in, and reading and revising those that go out; but all three are not enough. Saturday I take for writing minutes and revising despatches that go out, but find it too little. . . . You know how little I have written to you, to other correspondents still less; and yet the number of letters I have to answer is overwhelming. I have been at work for some hours now, but I have still twenty-five letters on my table requiring answers—six or eight from England. The want of time makes me half mad. . . . To add to my distress, people will have the kindness to breakfast with me. I am six miles away from them, but that is not sufficient. I shut my doors at all other times, come who may. I should be happy in my situation if I had more time for the performance of my various duties, but the want of it plagues me. The only resource left is to withdraw from society, and to work at night, but I shall tear my eyes to pieces if I do."—[February 3, 1828.] This systematic distribution of time was not found to answer; and so, a few weeks later, it was changed. "I have made," he said, "a great alteration in my mode of despatching my business. I reserve no day for any particular branch, but get over all, as well as I can, as it comes in. . . . The bundle of private letters which used to accumulate for the day in the week set apart was quite overwhelming and insurmountable. I now go pell-mell at all in the ring, and, as far as the new method has yet gone, it promises better than the last."—[March 8, 1828.] But the claims of society were more oppressive than the claims of official work. "It requires," he wrote, "a strong conviction of its being a duty to sustain me in keeping up society. Were I to follow my natural or acquired taste, I should fast sink into habits of seclusion when the company of friends is not obtain-

1828—29. able. I have nothing to complain of in society, and am happy enough when in it, but the making up of parties, issuing of invitations, &c., are troublesome operations, which harass me, and frequently drive me from my purpose. My conscience is continually reproaching me with want of hospitality and attention to individuals entitled to them. Many a man has come to Calcutta, and gone from it without once receiving an invitation to my house, which an indescribable something—anything but good will—has prevented until it was too late. My house, although it has more rooms for entertaining than any other house in Calcutta, is deficient in that kind of room which is requisite in large parties—the ones which, with respect to general society, would answer best for me, as killing all my birds with one stone. I am thinking of building a grand ball-room. It would not, I suppose, cost less, altogether, than 20,000 rupees—a large sum to lay out on another man's property; but I am not sure that it would not be cheaper than giving parties in the Town-hall—my other resource—each of which costs above 8000 rupees, and cannot, therefore, be often repeated. . . . I enjoy the society of our house-party very much, retaining, however, my old habits of seclusion from breakfast to dinner, which are seldom broken in upon, except by the Bushby's children, who trot up frequently to my loft in the third story, where I have my sitting-room and library as well as bedroom. It is, in short, the portion of the house which I keep to myself, and there they make me show them the pictures, &c., being privileged by infancy to supersede all affairs of every kind.”—[May 18, 1828.]

His distaste for general society seemed to grow stronger as time advanced, but to the outer world it appeared that he delighted in crowds. He gave splendid entertainments—large dinner-parties and balls—but he regarded these merely as “duties proper to his station.” What he thought on the subject may be gathered from his correspondence with his familiar friends; but in this I am inclined to think that there is observable a little of the exaggeration of temporary languor and depression of spirit. “I am withdrawing myself more and more from public intercourse,” he wrote in March, 1829, “and am only waiting an opportunity to shake off the remaining shackles and become entirely a recluse; since neither is

the performance of public duty compatible with a waste of time in society, nor is knowledge of men's characters in general compatible with that respect for them without which society has no pleasure in it. I am becoming every day more and more sour, and morose, and dissatisfied." Metcalfe had said this before. But he deceived himself to his own disadvantage. It was impossible to look into his kindly expressive face, or to converse with him for a few minutes, without feeling that there was in truth no sourness or moroseness in his nature. The fact is, that he lamented the loss of his old friends, and he had not at that time formed new associations of the same gratifying character. "The longer I live," he said, "the less I like strange faces, or any other faces than those of friends whom I love." It may be suggested, also, that the depression of spirit often observable in his correspondence at this time is attributable in some measure to his sedentary habits. He took very little exercise. Unlike Malcolm and Elphinstone, he was an exceedingly bad horseman, and everything of an athletic character was entirely out of his line.^{*}

But, as time advanced, Sir Charles Metcalfe's position in Calcutta became more and more endurable, until he well-nigh regained his old buoyancy and elasticity of mind. In July, 1828, Lord William Bentinck had succeeded Lord Amherst as Governor-General of India. Metcalfe's first impressions of his new colleague were favourable to him, but somehow or other the two did not assimilate, and the councillor, who had some reason to think that Lord William had been prejudiced against him by the Rumbold party at home, said that the new Governor-General did not understand him, and preferred anybody's opinions to his. "This forces me," he said, "to record dissentient opinions in minutes more frequently than would be necessary, if we could co-operate with more sympathy." And then he added, with that union of candour and modesty which

* He occasionally rode out in the early morning within the spacious grounds of his mansion at Alipore, which he occupied during the later years of his Calcutta residence. He had a stout cobby white horse, which carried him with tolerable safety, and he generally wore top-boots. These had been

for many years a favourite article of attire. I found among his papers a rough pen-and-ink sketch, contrasting the lower extremities of Sir Charles Metcalfe (in tops) with those of Lord Hastings (in hussars), the distinctive difference being by no means confined to the boots.

1830—32. made him so often express mistrust of himself, “I fear that there is a want of suavity, or a want of blandness, or some other defect about me, that is not palatable.” This was, perhaps, the last cause in the world to which any one else would have assigned the want of cordial co-operation between the two statesmen which marked the first year of their connexion. But, whatever the cause, it soon passed away, and with it the effect. Lord William Bentinck and Sir Charles Metcalfe became fast friends and sympathising workmen. This alone would have made the latter a happier man. But there were favourable circumstances which touched him more nearly. He was gathering around him a cordon of friends. Lord William Bentinck went up the country, and then Mr. Bayley became Vice-President in Council and Deputy-Governor of Bengal. His time of office, however, having expired in November, 1830, Sir Charles Metcalfe succeeded him. This enabled him to add to his “family” two members, who contributed much to his happiness. The one was Captain John Sutherland, of whom I have already spoken ; the other was Lieutenant James Higginson,* whose acquaintance he had made at Bhurtpore, and who had afterwards been on the Staff of Lord William Bentinck. The former was now made private-secretary, and the latter aide-de-camp, to the Deputy-Governor ; and Metcalfe no longer complained that he was cut off from his friends.

As the members of Council were appointed only for five years, Sir Charles Metcalfe’s term of office would have expired in August, 1832. But Lord William Bentinck, as the time approached, determined to make an effort to retain his services ; so he wrote urgently to the President of the India Board (Mr. Charles Grant), saying : “Sir Charles Metcalfe will be a great loss to me. He quite ranks with Sir Thomas Munro, Sir John Malcolm, and Mr. Elphinstone. If it be intended—and the necessity cannot admit of a doubt—to form a second local Government in Bengal, he undoubtedly ought to be at the head. I strongly recommend him. Whilst he has always maintained the most perfect independence of character and conduct, he has been to me a most zealous supporter and friendly

* Afterwards Sir James Higginson, honorary character, contingent on the Governor of the Mauritius. These arrangements were necessarily of a temporary character, contingent on the return of the Governor-General to the Presidency.

colleague." The "second local Government," however, was not then ripe. So the Court of Directors, by a special vote, continued Sir Charles Metcalfe's period of service in Council to August, 1834; and so he remained at the Council Board in Calcutta.

1833-34.

There was still higher office in store for him. When under the new Charter it was contemplated to establish a fourth Presidency in Upper India, to embrace very much the tract of country which Metcalfe had spoken of as conferring upon him the "Kingship of the East and the West," he was selected to fill the office; and he was nominated also Provisional Governor-General of India, to succeed on the death or resignation of Lord William Bentinck, in the event of an interregnum in the Government. How afterwards the Government of Agra shrivelled down into a Lieutenant-Governorship need not be narrated here. He had scarcely reached Allahabad and assumed the Government, when he received intelligence of the intended departure of Lord William Bentinck. As "Provisional Governor-General," therefore, in the absence of any substantive appointment to the high office, it was now Metcalfe's privilege to receive from him the reins of Government. He hastened, therefore, back to the Presidency, and arrived in time to shake the departing ruler by the hand, and to bid God-speed to him and to that pearl of gentlewomen, his admirable wife.

With what sentiments Lord William Bentinck parted from his colleague may be gathered from his own recorded words. "My connexion," said the Governor-General, "with Sir Charles Metcalfe in Council, during more than six years, ought to make me the best of witnesses, unless, indeed, friendship should have blinded me and conquered my detestation of flattery, which, I trust, is not the case. I therefore unhesitatingly declare, that whether in public or private life, I never met with the individual whose integrity, liberality of sentiment, and delicacy of mind, excited in a greater degree my respect and admiration. The State never had a more able or upright councillor, nor any Governor-General a more valuable and independent assistant and friend; and during the same period, any merit that can be claimed for the principles by which the Indian Government has been

1835.

guided, to Sir Charles must the full share be assigned. Neither has the access which my situation has given me to the public records and to past transactions led me to form a less favourable opinion of his preceding career. I need not enter into particulars. Suffice it to express my sincere impression, that among all the statesmen, who since my first connexion with India have best served their country and have most exalted its reputation and interests in the East, Webb, Close, Sir Arthur Wellesley, Elphinstone, Munro, and Malcolm, equal rank and equal honour ought to be given to Sir Charles Metcalfe."

The Governor-Generalship.
March 20,
1835.

He had now reached the topmost step of the ladder. The dreams of the Eton cloisters, the air-built castles of the Muttra tent, had become substantial realities. He had said that he would some day be Governor-General of India—and now the great official crown was upon his head. It might not remain there long, but it was something to be Governor-General even for a day. Some believed that the substantive appointment would be, and all hoped that it might be, conferred upon him.* Metcalfe, however, had no expectation of such a

* The Court of Directors, who, as already told, had oscillated between Elphinstone and Malcolm, were, when the former declined to return to India, unwilling to fill up the substantive appointment at once. They wished that Sir Charles Metcalfe should continue as long as possible at the head of the administration, and they believed that the King's Government, who were then adverse to the nomination of a Company's officer, might in time be reconciled to it. The following are the resolutions which were carried by a majority of fifteen to two of the members of the Court.

"That this Court deeply lament that the state of Lord William Bentinck's health should be such as to deprive the Company of his most valuable services, and this Court deem it proper to record, on the occasion of his Lordship's resignation of the office of Governor-General, their high sense of the distinguished ability, energy, zeal, and integrity with which his Lordship has discharged the arduous duties of his exalted station

"That, referring to the appointment which has been conferred by the Court, with the approbation of his Majesty, on

Sir Charles T. Metcalfe, provisionally, to act as Governor-General of India, upon the death, resignation, or coming away of Lord William Bentinck; and advertizing also to the public character and services of Sir Charles Metcalfe, whose knowledge, experience, and talents eminently qualify him to prosecute successfully the various important measures consequent on the new Charter Act, this Court are of opinion that it would be inexpedient at present to make any other arrangement for supplying the office of Governor-General. And it is resolved, accordingly, that the Chancery be authorised and instructed to communicate this opinion to his Majesty's Ministers through the President of the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India."

Mr. Grant was at this time President of the Board of Control. His objections, as given in his letter of October 1, 1831, are worth quoting "With respect to the appointment to that office of any servant of the Company, however eminent his knowledge, talents, and experience may confessedly be, his Majesty's Ministers agree in the sentiments of Mr. Canning, expressed in a letter

result. In the first place, he knew that the influence of the Court and the Cabinet would assuredly prevail against the "old Indian" party at home; and, in the second, he felt assured that in the eyes of a large section of that party, he had irremediably damaged himself by his conduct at Hyderabad. He was right. But the interregnum was one of unexpected duration. The appointment of Lord Heytesbury, made by the Tories, having been cancelled by the Whigs, there followed much discussion, involving much delay, with respect to the choice of a successor; and so Sir Charles Metcalfe remained at the head of the Indian Government until the spring of 1836.

The interregnum of the Indian civilian was not a barren ^{Liberation of the Press.} one. It was rendered famous by an act, which has, perhaps, been more discussed, and with greater variance of opinion, than any single measure of any Governor-General of India. He liberated the Indian Press. Under the Government of his predecessor, freedom of speech had been habitually allowed, but the sword of the law still remained in the hand of the civil Government, and at any time it might have been stretched forth to destroy the liberty which was thus exercised. But Metcalfe was not content with this state of things. He desired that the free expression of thought should be the right of all classes of the community. He took his stand boldly upon the broad principle, that to deny this right is to contend "that the essence of good government is to cover the land with darkness." "If their argument," he added, "be that the spread of knowledge may eventually be fatal to our rule in India, I close with them on that point, and maintain that, whatever may be the consequence, it is our duty to communicate the benefits of knowledge. If India could be preserved as a part of the British Empire

from him to the Court on the 25th of December, 1820, that the case can hardly be conceived in which it would be expedient that the *highest* office of the Government in India should be filled otherwise than from England, and that that one main link at least between the systems of the Indian and British Governments ought, for the advantage of both, to be invariably maintained. On this principle it has usually been

thought proper to act; and in the various important measures consequent on the new Charter Act, his Majesty's Ministers see much to enjoin the continuance of the general practice, but nothing to recommend a deviation from it." Before Lord Grey's Government had appointed a successor to Lord William Bentinck, there was a ministerial crisis, and Lord Heytesbury was nominated by the Tories.

1835—36. only by keeping its inhabitants in a state of ignorance, our domination would be a curse to the country, and ought to cease. But I see more ground for just apprehension in ignorance itself. I look to the increase of knowledge with a hope that it may strengthen our empire; that it may remove prejudices, soften asperities, and substitute a rational conviction of the benefits of our Government; that it may unite the people and their rulers in sympathy, and that the differences which separate them may be gradually lessened, and ultimately annihilated. Whatever, however, be the will of Almighty Providence respecting the future government of India, it is clearly our duty, as long as the charge be confided to our hands, to execute the trust to the best of our ability for the good of the people.” It would be difficult to gainsay this; but the Court of Directors of the East India Company had not much sympathy with these “high-flown notions.” The intelligence of what he had done reached them whilst the question of the Governor-Generalship was still an open one. It may have in some measure influenced the decision, but I scarcely think that it did. At all events, Metcalfe soon heard from England, with some exaggeration, that he had lost the confidence of the Company. Lord Auckland was appointed Governor-General of India; but the provisional appointment which made him the “second man in India,” was renewed in his favour. The King’s Ministers, too, testified their confidence in him by recommending him for the Grand Cross of the Bath. The new Governor-General carried out the insignia, and formally invested him soon after his arrival.

It was now a question earnestly debated in Metcalfe’s mind whether he would take ship for England, or whether he would return to the North-Western Provinces to take charge of the administration which he had quitted to assume the Governor-Generalship. It was no longer the Agra Presidency. It had become a Lieutenant-Governorship, and was formally in the gift of the Governor-General. Lord Auckland was very desirous that he should accept the office, and some of the leading members of the Court of Directors had urged him not to decline the offer. So he made up his mind to remain a little longer yet in harness. There was really as much substantive

1836.

authority in the new constitution as in the old. "It is inferior only," he wrote to his aunt, Mrs. Monson, "in designation, trappings, and allowances. These are not matters which I should think a sufficient reason for giving, when I am desired to stay by those whose uniform kindness to me gives them a right to claim my services. I feel that I have no excuse for abandoning a post to which I am called by all parties concerned in the election, and in which I have greater opportunities of being useful to my country and to mankind than I could expect to find anywhere else. The decision, however, costs me much. I had been for some time indulging in pleasing visions of home and the enjoyments of retirement and affectionate intercourse with relatives and friends." He had now spent thirty-five years in India, without leaving the country for a day; but his interest in his work was as keen as in the old days of Lord Wellesley and Lord Minto.

But he had not long exercised the powers of Lieutenant-Governor, when renewed reports came to him from England that the Court of Directors regarded him with dissatisfaction on account of his liberation of the Indian Press. This disquieted him greatly, and in his disquietude he addressed a letter to the official organ of the Company, in which he requested, that if he had really lost the confidence of the Court, his provisional appointment of Governor-General might be withdrawn, and that he might resign his office and retire from the service of the Company. "If the reports," he wrote ^{August 22.} to Mr. Melvill, "which have reached this country from England be true; if I have really lost the confidence of the Court, and have fallen so low in their estimation as deliberately to be deemed now unworthy of the position which they accorded to me three years ago in the Government of a subordinate Presidency, it is my earnest entreaty that the Court will withdraw from me the provisional appointment of Governor-General, or otherwise intimate their pleasure to me, in order that I may resign that appointment, and retire from the service of the Company. I have no wish to retain by forbearance an appointment conferred on me when I was honoured with the confidence of the Court, if that confidence is gone, or to hold my office on mere sufferance, or to serve in any capacity under the stigma of displeasure and distrust. But if I retain the

1836.

confidence of the Court unimpaired, it will be highly gratifying to me to know that I have been misled by erroneous reports in supposing the possibility of the contrary. In that case I have no desire to retire from the public service. I am proud of the honour conferred by the provisional appointment of Governor-General. I take a great interest in the duties which I have to perform as Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces of India, and I am willing to devote myself with all my heart to the service of the State as long as health and faculties enable me to work to any useful purpose. I am aware that I lay myself open to reproof in imagining a want of confidence which has not been authentically announced to me by any of those means which the Court has at command. If I have erred in this respect, and have not had sufficient cause for this address, I trust that the Court will forgive the error. Having received on former occasions marked proofs of confidence and esteem, I could not rest easy under reports, in some degree strengthened by appearances, which indicated the loss of those favourable sentiments."

Before this letter was written, intelligence had reached Agra that Lord Elphinstone had been appointed Governor of Madras. Metcalfe had some time before been talked of for that post; but it had been given to Sir Frederick Adam, mainly, it was believed, through the interest of Lord Brougham. This had not in any way disturbed him; and, in truth, he had no desire to go to Madras. But when some good-natured friends in London told him that his appointment to that Government had been again discussed, and that his claims had been set aside as an intentional mark of the Court's displeasure, the case wore a new aspect. Very different considerations determined the appointment of Lord Elphinstone; but that the liberation of the Press had caused Metcalfe to lose caste and credit in Leadenhall-street was repeated in so many "Europe letters" to himself and others, that he could not disbelieve the story. "I do not care a straw for the Government of Madras," he wrote to his aunt, Mrs. Monson, "and I am probably better where I am; but I do not mean to serve in avowed disgrace." To his friend, Mr. Tucker, he wrote in the same strain: "The loss of the Madras Government did not give me any concern, but the asserted dissatisfaction of the Court distressed me, and

1837.

I felt that I could not remain in a state of implied disgrace. I therefore wrote as I did to you, and I am now expecting the Court's reply, on the receipt of which I shall have to make up my mind as to the course which I ought to pursue." In August the answer came. It was outwardly cold and formal. It expressed the regret of the Court that Sir Charles Metcalfe should have thought it necessary to make such a communication, and added that the continuance in him provisionally of the highest office which the Court had it in its power to confer, ought to have satisfied him that their confidence had not been withdrawn.

But Metcalfe was not satisfied; so he forthwith sent in his resignation, and prepared to return to England. The letter which he addressed to the Secretary of the East India Company clearly indicated how painfully he was hurt. "The Court," he said in conclusion, "pronounced that my letter was altogether unnecessary. With deference, I think that there was good and sufficient reason to seek an understanding with the Court, for any one who regards the approbation of his superior as an essential condition of his servitude. Either I had lost or I retained the confidence of the Court. If the latter were the case, a few kind words to that effect would have assured me that I could continue to serve without discredit. Instead of which, I receive a laconic letter, taking no notice whatever of the sentiments expressed in mine, but conveying a reproof for having written it, given in a tone which leaves me no reason to suppose that the Court entertain the least desire for the continuance of my services. Under all these circumstances, I must conclude—1st, that I was intentionally disgraced when I was passed over in the nomination of a Governor for Madras; 2nd, that the Court retain the sentiments under which that disgrace was purposely inflicted, and hence no wish to remove the feelings which it was calculated to excite; and 3rd, that your letter of the 15th of April, with reference to mine of the 22nd of August last, could only produce the effect that it has produced, and, consequently, that my resignation was contemplated in the despatch of that letter. I trust that I have sufficiently explained the causes which compel me reluctantly to retire from the public service, to

1837. which, if I could have remained with honour, I would willingly have devoted the whole of my life."

There is no incident of Sir Charles Metcalfe's official career of which I have thought so much as of this, and regarding which, as the result of this much thought, I feel such great doubt and uncertainty. One of the shrewdest and most sagacious men whom I have ever known, with half a century of experience of public affairs to give weight to his words, said to me, with reference to this very subject, "The longer I live, the more convinced I am that over-sensitiveness is a fault in a public man;" and there is great truth in the saying. Another very sagacious public servant has written : "With regard to hostility evinced towards a statesman behind his back, and which comes privately to his knowledge, his best course will be to leave it unnoticed, and not allow his knowledge of it to transpire." This also I believe to be true. I am disposed, therefore, at the present time to think that it would have been a wiser and a more dignified course to have left the rumours of which I have spoken wholly unnoticed. No man could have afforded it better than Metcalfe; no man could more certainly have lived down any temporary discredit in high places. Every official man—nay, every man who has much commerce with the world—has, in the course of his career, to contend with ignorance and misconception, if not with envy and malice. Every one, indeed, who has done anything better than his fellows must lay his account for this as one of the inevitable crosses of his life. It is better, in such a case, "to bear up and steer right on," supported by "the conscience," than to 'bout ship and go into harbour, when the winds are a little adverse. Life is too short for contests of this kind—too short even for explanations. Metcalfe was fully persuaded in his own mind that what he did was right; and as the superior authorities did not tell him that he was wrong, I think that it would have been better if he had left unnoticed the private reports which reached him from England. No public servant, of any grade or any capacity, can expect all that he does to be approved by higher authority; and if even a declared difference of opinion on one particular point is to afford a sufficient warrant for resignation of office, the public service of the country would be brought to a dead-lock. Nor is it to be forgotten, with

Sir James
Melvill.

Mr Henry
Taylor.

1837

reference to more special considerations affecting the individual case, that this question of the liberation of the press was one on which the opinions of thinking men were very much divided, and that some of Metcalfe's staunchest friends and warmest admirers doubted the expediency of what he had done, though they never ceased to repose confidence in his general wisdom as a statesman.

But if some infirmity were apparent in this passage of Metcalfe's life, it was the infirmity of a noble mind, and it detracts nothing from the general admiration to which he is entitled. It arose out of what one who knew him well, from the very commencement of his career, described as his "very quick and delicate and noble sense of public character." Some years before, he said that he was getting callous to injustice, and less anxious regarding the opinions of others;* but, in truth, he never ceased to be very sensitive on the score of his official reputation, and very eager to repel all assaults upon it. And that, not from any selfish or egotistical feelings, but from a prevailing sense that by so doing he was maintaining the dignity and the purity of the Public Service. Indeed, the official sensitiveness, of which I am speaking, marks more distinctly than anything else the great frontier-line between the old and the new race of public servants in India. It had become a laudable ambition to pass through all the stages of official life without a stain or even a reproach.

No man ever left India, carrying with him such lively regrets and such cordial good wishes from all classes of the community. I can well remember the season of his departure from Calcutta. The Presidency was unwontedly enlivened by Metcalfe balls and Metcalfe dinners, and addresses continually pouring in, and deputations both from English and Native Societies. It would take much of time and much of space to speak of all these; and I must refrain from the attempt to record them. But it may be mentioned that, on one of these farewell festal occasions, after Metcalfe's health had been drunk in the ordinary way, as a statesman

* "I am getting callous to such injustice. My experience at Hyderabad has taught me some useful lessons, and though it gives me a worse opinion of human nature than I had before, it will make me individually less liable to annoyance, by making me less anxious regarding the opinions of others"—*Bhurtpore, Feb., 1826.*

1837

who had conferred great benefits upon the country, and a member of society beloved by all who had come within the circle of his genial influence, another toast was given in the words “Charles Metcalfe, the soldier of Deeg.” The story of the “little stormer,” then but slightly known, was told, and well told; and the military enthusiasm of the many officers there present was roused to the highest pitch. I shall never forget the applause of the assembly which greeted this unexpected tribute to the completeness of Sir Charles Metcalfe’s character. All that gay assemblage in the Town-hall of Calcutta rose to him, with a common movement, as though there had been but one heart among them all, and many an eye glistened as women waved their handkerchiefs and men clapped their hands—and every one present thought how much he was loved.

His opinions. During his tenure of these several offices in the Supreme Government of India, Sir Charles Metcalfe wrote many very important State papers, officially known as “Minutes,” which were always respectfully received by his colleagues, and very often influenced their opinions in the right direction. In other shapes, too, he sometimes recorded his views; and a large selection from his papers has been laid before the world. They are distinguished by a remarkable amount of sagacious common sense, conveyed in most lucid English. I do not know a better example of a thoroughly good official style. There was in all he wrote a directness of purpose, a transparent sincerity, which won the admiration of the reader, if it did not convince his judgment. To say that he was without his own particular prejudices would be almost to say that he was perfect. In many respects he was before his age; but there were some points with respect to which he was behind it. He demonstrated, in the most convincing manner, the earnestness of his desire to advance the moral progress of the people of India; but it does not appear that he had much sympathy with the efforts which were being made to advance the material progress of the country. He could clearly see what were the benefits to be derived from the diffusion of knowledge among the subjects of the British Government in India;

1837.

but he was sceptical regarding the profit to be drawn from the improvement of internal and external communications of the country, by means of good roads, and steam vessels to and from England. It puzzled many people at the time, and, doubtless, it has puzzled many since, to understand how one, who had been among the first to recommend the free admission of European settlers into England, should have undervalued such material aids to the promotion of European enterprise.

There was another point upon which he held opinions differing from those of the majority of his cotemporaries; but Time has revealed that if he stood alone, in this respect, he stood alone in his wisdom. He often spoke and wrote of the insecurity of our British Empire in India, and predicted that it would some day be imperilled, if not overthrown, by our own Native Army. He expressed himself very strongly in conversation on this subject, sometimes saying that we were sitting on a barrel of gunpowder and never knew when it would explode, and at others declaring that we should wake up some morning and find that we had lost India. He based his opinion on such arguments as the following: "Our hold is so precarious, that a very little mismanagement might accomplish our expulsion; and the course of events may be of itself sufficient, without any mismanagement. We are, to appearance, more powerful in India now than we ever were. Nevertheless, our downfall may be short work; when it commences, it will, probably, be rapid, and the world will wonder more at the suddenness with which our immense empire may vanish, than it has done at the surprising conquest that we have achieved. The cause of this precariousness is that our power does not rest on actual strength, but upon impression. Our whole real strength is in the few European regiments, speaking comparatively, that are scattered singly over the vast space of subjugated India. That is the only portion of our soldiery whose hearts are with us, and whose constancy can be relied on in the hour of trial. All our native establishments, military and civil, are the followers of fortune; they serve us for their livelihood, and generally serve us well. From a sense of what is due to the hand that feeds them—which is one of the virtues that they most extol—they

1837

may often display fidelity under trying circumstances ; but in their inward feelings they partake more or less of the universal disaffection which prevails against us, not from bad government, but from natural and irresistible antipathy ; and were the wind to change—to use a native expression—and to set in steadily against us, we could not expect that their sense of honour, although there might be splendid instances of devotion, would keep the mass on our side in opposition to the common feeling which, with one view, might for a time unite all India from one end to the other. Empires grow old, decay, and perish. Ours in India can hardly be called old, but seems destined to be short lived. We appear to have passed the brilliancy and vigour of our youth, and it may be that we have reached a premature old age. We have ceased to be the wonder that we were to the natives ; the charm which once encompassed us has been dissolved, and our subjects have had time to inquire why they have been subdued. The consequences of the inquiry may appear hereafter. If these speculations are not devoid of foundation, they are useful in diverting our minds to the contemplation of the real nature of our power, and in preventing a delusive belief of its impregnability. Our greatest danger is not from a Russian power, but from the fading of the impression of our invincibility from the minds of the native inhabitants of India. The disaffection which would root us out abundantly exists ; the concurrence of circumstances sufficient to call it into general action may at any time happen."* And again : " Some say that our empire in India rests on opinion, others on main force. It, in fact, depends on both. We could not keep the country by opinion, if we had not a considerable force ; and no force that we could pay would be sufficient, if it were not aided by the opinion of our invincibility. Our force does not operate so much by its actual strength as by the impression which it produces, and that impression is the opinion by which we hold India. Internal insurrection, therefore, is one of the greatest of our dangers, or, rather,

* This is part of a paper written in reply to some questions propounded in England at the time of the Parliamentary Inquiries of 1832-33, and submitted by Government to the principal autho-

rities on questions of Indian government. Whether this paper was ever officially sent in I do not know. It does not appear in the printed replies to these questions in the parliamentary papers.

1837

becomes so when the means of quelling it are at a distance. It is easy to decide it, because insurgents may not have the horse, foot, and artillery of a regular army; but it becomes serious if we have not those materials at hand. Nothing can be a stronger proof of our weakness in the absence of a military force, even when it is not far removed, than the history of such insurrections as have occurred. The civil power, and all semblance of the existence of our government, are instantly swept away by the torrent."

But although Sir Charles Metcalfe believed that the permanent fidelity of the Sepoy army could not be relied upon, he admitted that the native soldiery were in many respects worthy of admiration, and that it was our policy to maintain large bodies of them, as we could not turn the whole of India into a great European garrison. "The late Governor-General,"* he wrote, "condemns our Indian army, in a sweeping sentence, as being the most expensive and least efficient in the world. If it were so, how should we be here? Is it no proof of efficiency that it has conquered all India? Is it no proof of efficiency that India is more universally tranquil, owing to our Indian army, than it ever was under any native Government or Governments that we read of? If our Indian army be so expensive, why do we not employ European troops alone to maintain India? Why but because Europeans are so much more expensive that we could not pay a sufficient number? If our Indian army be so inefficient, why do we incur the expense of making soldiers of the natives? Why do we not entertain the same number of undisciplined people, who would cost much less? Why, but because then we should lose the country from the inefficiency of our native force? If, therefore, the Indian army be preferable to a European force, on account of its cheapness, and to other native troops on account of its efficiency; if we cannot substitute any other force cheaper and more efficient, how can it justly be said to be the most expensive and least efficient army in the world? It enables us to conquer and keep India. If it performs well every duty required of it, hard work in quarters, good service in the field, how can it be subject to the imputation of inefficiency? The proof of its

* Lord William Bentinck.

1837.

cheapness and of its efficiency is, that we cannot substitute any other description of force at once so cheap and so efficient."

It was doubtful, in those days, whether India could afford to maintain a permanent European force of thirty thousand men. Sir Charles Metcalfe felt this very strongly; but he could see no other element of safety than the presence of our English regiments, unless our national manhood should take root in the soil by the agency of extensive colonisation. "Considering," he said, "the possible disaffection of our native army as our only internal danger, and the want of physical strength and moral energy as rendering them unable to contend with a European enemy, his Lordship proposes that the European portion of our army should be one-fourth, and eventually one-third, in proportion to the strength of our native army. He considers this as requiring a force of thirty thousand Europeans in India. In the expediency of having at least this force of Europeans, even in ordinary times, I entirely concur; that is, if we can pay them. But the limit to this, and every other part of our force, must be regulated by our means. If we attempted to fix it according to our wants, we should soon be without the means of maintaining any army. Thirty thousand European troops would be vastly inadequate for the purpose of meeting the imagined Russian invasion, for we should more require European troops in the interior of India at that time than at any other. To have our army on a footing calculated for that event is impossible. Our army cannot well be greater than it is, owing to want of means. It cannot well be less, owing to our other wants. Such as it is in extent, it is our duty to make it as efficient as we can, with or without the prospect of a Russian invasion; and this is the only way in which we can prepare for that or any other distant and uncertain crisis. On the approach of such an event we must have reinforcements of European troops from England to any amount required, and we must increase our native force according to the exigency of the time. We could not long exist in a state of adequate preparation, as we should be utterly ruined by the expense."

I may give one more extract from his official papers—it was written when he was Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces—showing the just and generous senti-

1837.

ments with which he addressed himself to the consideration of our relations with the Native States of India: "Several questions," he said, "have lately occurred, in which our interests and those of other powers and individuals are at variance, and in the decision of which we are likely to be biased by regard for our own benefit, unless we enter with a liberal spirit into the claims and feelings of others, and make justice alone the guide of our conduct. . . . In all these cases, the right on our part to come to the decision apparently most beneficial for our own interests, seems to me to be doubtful. Had our right been clear, I should be far from having any desire to suggest its relinquishment. But when the right is doubtful, when we are to be judges in our own cause, when, from our power, there is little or no probability of any resistance to our decision, it behoves us, I conceive, to be very careful lest we should be unjustly biased in our own favour, and to be liberal only in examining the claims and pretensions of other parties. The Christian precept, 'Do as you would be done by,' must be right in politics as well as in private life; and even in a self-interested view we should, I believe, gain more by the credit of being just and liberal to others, than by using our power to appropriate to ourselves everything to which we could advance any doubtful pretension."

So Metcalf returned to England, in the early part of 1838, after an absence of thirty-eight years. He had no thought of any further employment in the public service, except that which might be entailed upon him by the necessities of a seat in Parliament. He had an abundance of the world's wealth; he was unmarried; and he had done so much work that he might well content himself to be idle at the close of his life. Moreover, there was another and an all-sufficient reason why he should seek this autumnal repose. He had in India enjoyed better health than the majority of his countrymen, although he had taken no especial pains to preserve it. He had worked hard; he had lived well; and he had not resorted very freely to the great prophylactic agencies of air and exercise. Still, a naturally robust constitution had carried him.

1838

Metcalf in
England.

1838

through nearly forty years of unbroken work beneath an Indian sun. But the seeds of a painful and a fatal disease had been sown—at what precise time cannot be declared; but the first apparent symptoms manifested themselves at Calcutta, when a friend one day called his attention to a drop of blood on his cheek. It was the first discernible sign of a malignant cancer, which was to eat into his life and make existence a protracted agony. From that day there was perceptible an angry appearance of the skin. But the progress of the malady was so gradual, and it was attended with so little uneasiness, that neither did Metcalfe consult a medical practitioner, nor did the ailment attract the notice of the professional adviser who attended him. But, at the latter end of 1837, the malady had increased so much that he thought it necessary to take advice; the treatment was not effective, and soon afterwards Metcalfe returned to England. There he consulted Sir Benjamin Brodie, who prescribed for him, but without effect. There was, however, little pain, although the disease had assumed the shape of a decided ulcerous affection of the cheek; and so Metcalfe allowed time to pass, and neglected the complaint until no human agency could arrest it.

Of this sad story I must presently write more in detail. Meanwhile, Sir Charles Metcalfe is at Fern Hill, the paternal estate in Berkshire, which he had inherited from his elder brother. It had been his for a quarter of a century, and its revenues had been carefully nursed; for Metcalfe's official salary had been always more than enough for his uses, notwithstanding his overflowing hospitality and the unfailing cheerfulness of his giving. So he found himself a well-to-do country gentleman, and having carried home all his Indian hospitality, he soon filled his house with relatives and friends. But it was a very unsatisfactory state of life. He was alone in a crowd; uncomfortable in the midst of luxury; poor though surrounded by all that wealth could purchase; and always in a hurry without having anything to do. Liberal as he was, and accustomed to a profuse style of living, he was appalled by the extravagance of the servants' hall, and often longed for the self-supporting, rice-eating Khitmudgars and Bearers of the old time. Many years before, in his previsions of English life, he anticipated this state of things, and declared

1839.

that he would wrestle against it. He found it even worse than he expected, and he soon set his face against it. He had not been many months in England, when he wrote to Mrs. Monson : “ I have made up my mind to part with Fern Hill whenever I can make an arrangement for it to my satisfaction. My reasons for quitting are these: Firstly, the expense of living here is too great ; there being, in my opinion, more satisfactory and better uses for what income I have than spending it all on the mere eating and drinking of a large house and establishment. Secondly, the life is not suited to my disposition. I should like greater quiet and retirement, and the occasional enjoyment of affectionate society as a treat. A continual and incessant succession of company is too much for me. Thirdly, the only remedy is flight ; for neither can I reduce my establishment while I live in this house, nor can I shut my doors whilst I have accommodation for friends. Elsewhere, if I continue a private man, I can be more retired ; and retirement is best suited to my nature. Elsewhere I could live, I think, with sufficient hospitality on a fourth of what I should spend here, and as I have no desire to hoard, the difference may, I trust, be made more beneficial to others than it can be whilst wasted on a lazy, discontented establishment. If I go into Parliament, which I shall do, if I have an opportunity, the only alteration in my present plans will be, that I must reside for seven or eight months in London, and so far deprive myself of retirement for the sake of public duty.”—[February 25, 1839.]

For many years this seat in Parliament had been one of his most cherished day-dreams. But now that all outward circumstances seemed to place it within his reach, inward obstacles arose to retard his possession of the prize. The sensitiveness and delicacy of his nature caused him to revolt against the ordinary means by which entrance to the great assembly of the nation is obtained. He would neither buy nor beg a seat. Bribery was repugnant, and canvassing was distasteful, to him. His more experienced friends, therefore, assured him that small and large constituencies were equally beyond his reach. He, however, was content to wait. The opportunity of drifting into Parliament blamelessly and pleasantly might some day arise. Meanwhile, he could familiarise himself with the

Thoughts of
Parliament.

1839. details of European politics, and, by maturing his opinions on all the great questions of the day, strengthen his chance of some day realising the aspirations of the Eton cloisters and charming a listening Senate. His convictions were mostly those of advanced liberalism. He was against the finality of the Reform Bill ; he was eager for the repeal of the Corn-laws, for the overthrow of Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, and for the abolition of Church-rates. He inclined towards Vote by Ballot, Short Parliaments, and the exclusion of the Bishops from the House of Lords. The more he thought of these changes, the more he warmed towards them, and at last his enthusiasm broke out in a pamphlet entitled *Friendly Advice to Conservatives*, in which these views were expounded. But it was not decreed that he should ever stand forth to “head a party struggling for liberty,” in any other than this literary conflict.*

The Jamaica appointment.

For soon a new and undreamt-of field of public service lay stretched before him, and he was invited to occupy it by the responsible rulers of the land. Rumour had, ever since his return to England, been very busy with his name. He had been assigned to all sorts of places and appointments, likely and unlikely ; but now there was some solid foundation for the story of his re-employment. “Those who have sent me to Paris or to Ireland,” he wrote to Mrs. Monson, “seem to have been wrong, for the Almighty ruler of all things seems to have ordained that I am to go to Jamaica. Who would have thought of such a destination ? This proposal has been made to me, most unexpectedly, of course, on my part, by Lord Normanby, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the post being one of honour, owing to the difficulties at present besetting it, and the prospect of rendering important service, I have considered it a public duty to undertake the charge, and have accepted it without a moment’s hesitation. I have risen in the East, and must set in the West. It is a curious destiny.” To what immediate influences the Indian civilian owed his nomination to a post in the other hemisphere is not very apparent ; but I am inclined to think that the nomination is, in part at least, attributable to the strong language of ad-

* He was very nearly presenting himself to the electors of Glasgow in place of his friend Lord William Bentinck, who wished to resign in his favour, but who died before he could vacate the seat. Before this event occurred, Metcalfe’s mind had been diverted to other objects.

1839.

miration in which Lord William Bentinck had written of his some-time colleague to the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. "No man," he wrote, at the close of a glowing appeal in his friend's favour,* "has shown greater rectitude of conduct or more independence of mind. We served together for nearly seven years. His behaviour to me was of the noblest kind. He never cavilled upon a trifle, and never yielded to me on a point of importance."

With what feelings Metcalfe regarded the appointment may be further gathered from what he wrote of it to Sir Charles Trevelyan, who had laid the foundation of his own fame, as an assistant to Metcalfe at Delhi: "The possibility of serving in the West Indies never entered into my imagination. Neither had I any desire to quit England. The mode in which I was ambitious of devoting my humble services to the country was as an independent Member of Parliament, and it was my intention to embrace any good opportunity of seating myself there. In every other respect I longed for retirement, and was bent on arrangements for securing it in a greater degree than I had previously found practicable. While in this mind, and with these views, I was surprised by a proposal to undertake the government of Jamaica, and assented without a moment's hesitation, for there was a public duty of importance to be performed, and we are bound, I conceive, to make ourselves useful to our country whenever a prospect of being so presents itself. If I succeed in reconciling that valuable colony to the mother country, and promoting the welfare of both, I shall be gratified. The attempt will be a labour of love. If I fail, I shall have the consolation of having devoted myself heartily to the task, and can again seek the retirement which, with reference exclusively to my own ease and comfort, I prefer to anything else. I presume that you mean to return to India, and I shall be glad to find that your benevolent zeal and distinguished talent are again at work in that important field. The immense strides which we have recently taken in our political arrangements and military exertions will either raise our power greatly beyond its former pitch, or by causing our expenses to exceed our re-

* It was written with reference to the question of Metcalfe's liberation of the Indian Press.

1839.

sources, will make it more precarious than ever. In either case our country will require the best exertions of its ablest servants, and your future career, I doubt not, will be even more distinguished than your past."

Congratulations most cordial, and expressions of pleasure most sincere, poured in upon Metcalfe from all quarters before he took his departure for the West Indian island. But there was not one, perhaps, which more rejoiced his heart than that which he received from his old master—from the statesman at whose feet he had learnt the first lessons of official life. And no one rejoiced more than Lord Wellesley in the elevation of his former pupil. "It is a matter," he wrote, "of cordial joy and affectionate pride to me to witness the elevation of a personage whose great talents and virtues have been cultivated under my anxious care, and directed by my hand to the public service in India; where, having filled the first station in the Government of that vast empire with universal applause, his merits and exalted reputation have recommended him to his Sovereign and his country as the man best qualified to consummate the noblest work of humanity, justice, and piety ever attempted by any State since the foundation of civilised society. You have been called to this great charge by the free, unsolicited choice of your Sovereign; and that choice is the universal subject of approbation by the voice of her whole people: no appointment ever received an equal share of applause. In a letter which I had the honour of receiving from you, and which is published in my Indian despatches, you are pleased to say that you were educated in my school, and that it was the school of virtue, integrity, and honour. That school has produced much good fruit for the service of India. You are one of the most distinguished of that produce, and in your example it is a high satisfaction to me to observe that the benefits of my institution are now extended beyond the limits of that empire for whose good government it was founded."

* With what affectionate tenacity Lord Wellesley clung to those old memories of the College of Fort William is rendered still more apparent by his later correspondence with Mr Bayley—

another of his official pupils—which I have inserted in the Appendix, in pleasant illustration of the development of the Indian services.

In August, 1839, Sir Charles Metcalfe embarked for Kingston, and on the 21st of September he assumed charge of the Government of Jamaica. There were many difficult problems to solve, for the emancipation of the blacks had produced a great social and industrial revolution; and the transition-state, which had arisen, required very careful and adroit management. But he used to say that the work of government would be easy and pleasant to him if it were not for the Baptist missionaries. He had not been long in the island before a leading minister of that persuasion declared openly that, though their new governor hoped to find Jamaica a bed of roses, they would take care that every rose should have its thorns. "On my taking charge of the Government," wrote Metcalfe, "the course which I laid down for myself was to conciliate all parties, and by the aid of all parties to promote the happiness and welfare of Jamaica. I have reason to believe that I have succeeded, with the exception of the Baptist missionary party. . . . I have naturally asked myself why, having apparently succeeded in conciliating all parties, I have failed with respect to that of the Baptist missionaries? I have conducted myself towards them as I have towards every other denomination of Christian ministers in the island. I have subscribed with the same readiness to their chapels and schools whenever I have had an opportunity. I have not allowed the opinions which I have been forced to entertain of their political proceedings to influence my behaviour or demeanour towards them." He was driven, therefore, reluctantly to conclude, that the obstacle to his success with this particular section of the community lay in the catholicity of his benevolence. He loved all men, all races, all classes. He had, during nearly the whole of his adult life, been familiar with dusky faces, and had been ever kindly disposed towards people vulgarly described as of "black blood." His heart was as open towards the negro population as towards any other class of her Majesty's subjects in the West Indies; but he could not bring himself to straiten his sympathies in such a manner as to refuse to the white man the hand of brotherhood that he extended to the black. He knew that the latter had once belonged to a down-trodden race, and that it would take years of generous kind-

1839.
Jamaica.

1839. ness to compensate them for all the injuries which they had borne ; but he believed that the best means of ensuring for them this generous kindness was to narrow the gulf between the two races—not to keep alive all animosities, old memories of past wrong. But this wise and truly Christian policy was distasteful to the Christians of the Baptist Missionary Society. Metcalfe tried to inculcate the forgiveness of injuries and the extension of brotherly love between the black and the white races. But the Baptists taught other lessons ; and a quarter of a century afterwards their “ bloody instructions returned to plague the inventor.”*

Whilst Sir Charles Metcalfe was governing Jamaica, there was a change of government at home. A Conservative ministry was established in Downing-street. Lord Stanley (as I write, Lord Derby) passed into the Colonial Office ; but Metcalfe, though a high-pressure liberal, was not sufficiently a party man to be at all disturbed by the change. If he could observe any difference of policy, it was in a more catholic apprehension of the situation, and a more generous support of the opinions he had expressed, and the line of conduct he had desired to follow. Lord Stanley himself had, ministerially, emancipated the blacks of the West Indies. He was not likely to close his heart against the emancipated race ; but he was far too good and wise to take a limited, one-sided view of the obligations of humanity in such a crisis, and to think that the duties of the parent State were confined to the protection and encouragement of the coloured population of the colony. When, therefore, Sir Charles Metcalfe thought that the time had come when he might consistently lay down the reins of government, he was very anxious that it should not be thought that the change of Government had caused him to hasten the day of his retirement. “ I have given notice to the new ministers,” he wrote in November, 1841, “ that I may soon send in my resignation, in order that they may be prepared for it, and look about for my successor. I have done

* I gladly break off here from the pursuit of a painful subject. But it ought to be stated that Metcalfe carried with him to Jamaica very strong prepossessions in favour of the Baptist missionaries. He had known many eminent members of that communion

in India (including the venerable Dr. Carey), and among the farewell addresses he had received at Agra was one from the Baptist missionaries, thanking him for the countenance he had always afforded them

this in a manner which will preclude the idea that the change of ministry is the cause of my retirement, there being no reason for putting it on any ground but the true one, which is that, having done what I came to do—by which I mean the reconciliation of the colony with the mother country—I see no necessity for staying any longer.” So Metcalfe prepared himself to return to England, well satisfied that he had not laboured in vain. What he did in the West Indian colony has been thus comprehensively described by himself: “When,” he wrote in the letter to the Colonial Secretary referred to above, “the offer of the Governorship of this island and its dependencies was conveyed to me, my only inducement in accepting it was the hope of rendering some service to my country by becoming instrumental in the reconciliation of the colony to the mother country. That object was accomplished soon after my arrival by the good sense and good feeling of the colonists, who readily and cordially met the conciliatory disposition which it was my duty to evince towards them. The next subject which attracted my attention was the unsatisfactory feeling of the labouring population towards their employers. This has naturally subsided into a state more consistent with the relations of the parties, and there is no longer any ground of anxiety on that account. Other dissensions in the community, which grew out of the preceding circumstances, have either entirely or in a great degree ceased, and order and harmony, with exceptions which will occasionally occur in every state of society, may be said to prevail.”^{*}

In the following May, a successor having been appointed in the person of Lord Elgin, Sir Charles Metcalfe, amidst a perfect shower of warm-hearted valedictory addresses, embarked again for the mother country. When he arrived in England, the malady of which I have spoken had grown upon him; he suffered much pain; and it was his first care now to

Return to
England

* I do not profess, in this account of certain officers of the (East) Indian Services, to give a just narrative of Metcalfe’s West Indian, or of his subsequent Canadian administration. I may, however, mention here, in illustration of the military instincts of which I have before spoken, that he devoted himself very assiduously to the improvement of the sanitary condition of

the English soldier, especially in respect of his location on the hill country. In this good work Sir William Gomm, who commanded the troops, went hand in hand with him—neither leading and neither following. Perhaps, in a former record of this, I did not sufficiently acknowledge the obligations of humanity to Sir William Gomm.

1842

obtain the best surgical and medical advice. So he sent at once for his old Calcutta friend and professional adviser, Mr. Martin,* who went into consultation on the subject with Sir Benjamin Brodie and Mr. Keate. The ulcerous affection of the cheek had been much increased by the climate of Jamaica, with its attendant plague of flies, and perhaps by unskilful treatment. But his letters to England had made no mention of the complaint, and he had generally said that he was in excellent health. It was now clearly a most formidable disorder, and only to be combated by remedies of a most painful character. The diseased part, it was thought, might be cut out with the knife, or burnt out with caustic. The latter mode of treatment was finally approved. Metcalfe was told that it might destroy "the cheek through and through;" but he only answered, "Whatever you determine shall be done at once." So the caustic was applied. The agony was intense, but he bore it without a murmur. His quiet endurance of pain was something, indeed, almost marvellous.

The success of the operation was greater even than was expected. The sufferer was removed to Norwood for quiet and country air, and he wrote thence that the diseased part looked better than it had done for many years, but that there was no certainty of a permanent cure. From Norwood he went to Devonshire, where a country-house had been taken for him near Honiton, and where he remained for some time in the enjoyment of the affectionate society of his sister, Mrs. Smythe. But in the beginning of the new year he was roused from the tranquil pleasures of his country life by reports that it was the intention of Sir Robert Peel's Government to invite him to proceed as Governor-General to Canada. At first he laughed at the credulity of his friends who wrote to him on the subject. "I have no more idea of going to Canada," he wrote to Mr. Ross Mangles, "than of flying in the air. . . . The only thing that I have the least inclination for is a seat in Parliament, of which, in the present predominance of Toryism among the constituencies, there is no chance for a man who is for the Abolition of the Corn-laws, Vote by Ballot, Extension of the Suffrage, Amelioration of the Poor-laws for the benefit of the poor, equal rights to all sects of Christians in matters

* Now Sir James Ranald Martin.

of religion, and equal rights to all men in civil matters, and everything else that to his understanding seems just and right—and at the same time is totally disqualified to be a demagogue—shuns like a sensitive plant from public meetings, and cannot bear to be drawn from close retirement, except by what comes in the shape of real or fancied duty to his country.” But little as he thought of it at that time, the claims of duty were even then about to withdraw him from his retirement. Two days after these lines were written, the invitation to proceed to Canada reached him at Deer Park. The letter proposing the arrangement was playfully, but only too truly, described as Lord Stanley’s “fatal missive.” Sir Charles Metcalfe went to Canada as he went to Jamaica, because he believed that it was his duty to go; but the arms of death were around him as he embarked.

1842.

Into the history of the troubled politics of Canada at that time it would be beyond the scope of this Memoir to enter in detail. To Metcalfe everything was new and strange. There were many perplexing problems, the solution of which was beyond the range of his forty years’ experience of public life. He had for the first time to cope with all the difficulties and embarrassments of Government by Party—or, in other words, by a Parliamentary majority—and with the complications arising from a conflict of nationalities in a singularly varied population. He found, not much to his surprise, that as the representative of the monarchical principle of the constitution, he was expected to suffer himself to dwindle down into a mere cypher.

But he believed that to consent to this would be to abandon his duty to his sovereign. “To the question at issue,” he wrote to an old friend and fellow-collegian, “which is, whether the Governor is to be in some degree what his title imports, or a mere tool in the hands of the party that can obtain a majority in the representative body, I am, I conceive, ‘vir justus,’ and I certainly mean to be ‘tenax propositi,’ and hope ‘si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ.’” To another old Indian friend he wrote: “Fancy such a state of things in India, with a Mahomedan Assembly, and you will have some notion of my position. On a distinct demand from the Council for stipulations which would have reduced me to a nonentity, I refused. They instantly resigned, and were

1843.
The Governor-
Generalship of
Canada.

1843—44. supported by the House of Assembly. Since then I have not been able to form a Council likely to carry a majority. I have now to strive to obtain a majority in the present Parliament. If I fail in that, I must dissolve and try a new one. I do not know that I shall have a better chance in that ; and if I fail then, still I cannot submit, for that would be to surrender the Queen's Government into the hands of rebels, and to become myself their ignominious tool. I know not what the end will be. The only thing certain is that I cannot yield." A dissolution was imminent. His enemies raged furiously against him. They assailed him with bitterness, which manifested itself in all shapes, from the light language of ridicule to that of vehement indignation. Some called him "Old Square-toes" and "Charles the Simple." Others denounced him as a designing despot and an unscrupulous tyrant. The crisis was now upon him. An old and dear friend, of whom much has been said in this volume, had written to him from his quiet chambers in the Albany, saying : "If you think only of your own comfort and content, or were convinced that you were past more useful employment, you might enjoy your repose with as good a conscience as I do ; but if I had the energy and ability to fill such a place as yours, I would not give the few months of your approaching crisis for a hundred years of unprofitable engagement."

No man knew Charles Metcalfe better than Mounstuart Elphinstone—no man was more capable of reading and appreciating his character in all its finest shades and most subtle combinations. When Mr. Gibbon Wakefield wrote that remarkable pamphlet on the crisis in Canada, in which there appeared an elaborate portrait of the Governor-General, highly commendatory of his wonderful patience and endurance, his almost saint-like temper and his constant cheerfulness under the worst trials and provocations,¹ but in which some doubt was expressed as to whether the gentleness of his nature did not cause him to be sometimes regardless of .the

¹ The following passage is worthy of quotation : "I never witnessed such patience under provocation. I am speaking now of what I saw myself, and could not have believed without seeing. It was not merely quiet endurance, but a constant good-humoured cheerfulness

and lightness of heart in the midst of trouble enough to provoke a saint or make a strong man ill. To those who, like me, have seen three Governors of Canada literally worried to death, this was a glorious spectacle."

1843—11

duty of upholding his personal and official dignity, Mr. Elphinstone wrote to a friend, who had sent him the book, saying : " You cannot overrate the pleasure with which I see justice done to Metcalfe, and I am very much obliged to you for a publication in which he is so favourably spoken of. I am not sure, however, that I can admit that full justice is done to him even in it. The character given of him is admirable, even the part that seems mere panegyric shows sagacity and discrimination. I cannot quite agree with the censures, slight as they are. Metcalfe has unquestionably such a temper as is seldom given to man, but he surely is capable of indignation when there is anything to call it forth, and is not likely to invite ill-usage by showing himself wanting to his own dignity. I should think he was cautious, almost timid, in deliberating, but that he would be roused at once by opposition such as appeared to him factious or unreasonable. I agree that he is not well qualified to use the proper means for managing a popular government, and that he even despises the use of them ; but I cannot admit that he does not see the end in view, or the relation into which he wishes to bring the Governor and the popular branch of the Legislature. I think his neglect of the means a misfortune. It is great weakness to rely on management of individuals and parties (in which Lord Sydenham so much excelled) for the permanent support of a system, but it is requisite for enabling some solid measures to proceed without interruption. I think it is his overrating these supposed defects of Metcalfe's that has most led Mr. Wakefield to what I cannot but think a wrong conclusion. I cannot think that the disputes between the Governor-General and his Council are to be ascribed to mere ' incompatibility of character,' or to the parties not understanding each other. Those causes, no doubt, had their influence ; but were there not other grounds of disagreement, which no freedom of communication could have removed ? Lord Sydenham, it appears, conceded the responsibility of ministers ; Sir C. Bagot carried it into practice, but in this crisis, when the strongest and firmest hand was required to mark the boundary of this new distribution of power, he was incapacitated by sickness from undertaking that work at all. The whole power fell into the hands of the ministry, and Metcalfe had to re-

1843—14. conquer the most indispensable of his rights. In such circumstances, I doubt if any modification of character, or any skill and experience in parliamentary tactics, could have averted a collision, and I need not say that I most fully concur with Mr. Wakefield in thinking that Metcalfe should have the most full, open, and energetic support of Government. As to the particular sort of support which I understood you to hint at (some distinguished mark of favour on the part of the Crown), however much to be desired it is, I am afraid scarcely to be hoped for. A peerage is already due to Metcalfe for his services in Jamaica, and as he has no issue, it would be a very moderate boon; but Peel has from fifty to seventy applicants, many of whom rate even their public services high: he stops their mouths by professing a resolution not to complete the work of the Whigs in swamping the House of Lords; but if he once opens the door, ‘like to an entered tide they all rush by,’ and leave room for a new inundation of claimants.”

But rightly to understand what were the heroic constancy and courage of the man in the midst of all this great sea of trouble, we must ever keep before us the fact that he was suffering almost incessant physical pain, and that a lingering and torturing death was before him. The cancer which was eating into his face had destroyed the sight of one eye, and he was threatened with total blindness. He was compelled, therefore, to sit in a darkened room, and to employ an amanuensis, and when he was compelled to go abroad on public business, the windows of his carriage were so screened as to exclude the dust and the glare. Throughout the years 1843 and 1844 the disease had been steadily gaining ground, in spite of all the efforts and appliances of human skill. The Queen’s Government had sent out to Canada a young surgical practitioner of high promise, since abundantly fulfilled, recommended by Sir Benjamin Brodie and Mr. Martin, who were well acquainted with the case. But neither the skill of Mr. Pollock,* nor his

* Mr G. D. Pollock—second son of General Sir George Pollock, now surgeon to the Prince of Wales. Sir Charles Metcalfe thus wrote of him “I am most thankful to you and Sir Benjamin Brodie for all your kindness, and I shall be obliged to you if you will tell him that I am very sensible of it. Mr. Pol-

and winning in his manners, and his conversation, reputation, and experience afford encouragement. He is about to have a consultation with my other doctors, and will afterwards, I conclude, proceed to business. I shall put myself entirely in his hands, and abide by his judgment and treatment.”

1844-45

assiduous and tender ministrations, could avail more than to palliate, in some small measure, the more painful symptoms of his malady, and by the end of 1844 he had returned to England, assured that the cure of such a disease was beyond the reach of surgery or medicine. Metcalfe had by this time ceased to read or write for himself. At the beginning of 1845, by the help of an amanuensis, he gave the following account of himself to Mr. Martin : "I have three kind letters of yours unanswered. So long as I had the use of my eyes, I hoped that a day would come when I could take up my pen and thank you for them ; but to do that now I am obliged to borrow the aid of another hand, as my right eye is quite blind, and the other cannot be exerted with impunity. I am compelled to abstain almost entirely from reading and writing, both of which operations are performed for me ; thus much is in explanation of my not writing to you with my own hand. Pollock has quitted me on his return to London. I am exceedingly sorry to part with him, not only as a medical adviser, of whose skill and judgment I have a high opinion, and who had acquired considerable experience regarding the state of my complaint, but also as a most agreeable companion, in whose society I had great pleasure. Highly as I think of Pollock, I have lost all faith in chloride of zinc ; that powerful but destructive remedy has been applied over and over again, without efficacy, to the same parts of my cheek. The disease remains uneradicated, and has spread to the eye and taken away its sight. This, at least, is my opinion, although I am bound to hesitate in entertaining it, as I am not sure that Pollock is satisfied of the extension of the actual disease to the eye ; but if it be not the disease which has produced the blindness, it must be the remedy. I am inclined, however, to believe that it is in reality the disease, both from appearances and the continual pain. The complaint appears to me to have taken possession of the whole of that side of the face, although the surface is not so much ulcerated as it has heretofore been. I feel pain and tenderness in the head, above the eye and down the right side of the face as far as the chin, the cheek towards the nose and mouth being permanently swelled. I cannot open my mouth to its usual width, and have difficulty in inserting and masticating pieces of food.

1845

that a perfect cure is hopeless; I am, nevertheless, in the hands of a doctor who is inclined to follow Pollock's course, and by whose judgment I shall implicitly abide. Having no hope of a cure, my chief anxiety now regards my remaining eye, which sympathises so much with the other that I am not without fear of total blindness, which is not a comfortable prospect, although, if it should come, I shall consider it my duty to resign myself to it with cheerfulness. Under these circumstances you will readily imagine that I should be very glad if I could return home, both for the chance of benefit from the medical skill that is to be found in the metropolis, and, independently of that, for the sake of retirement and repose, which are requisite for an invalid such as I now am; but I cannot reconcile it to my own sense of duty to quit my post in the present state of affairs in this country. I have no doubt of the generous readiness of her Majesty's Government to meet any application that I might make for permission to return, but I have myself no inclination to abandon the loyal portion of the community in Canada, who in the recent crisis have made a noble and successful stand in support of her Majesty's Government. Until, therefore, I see a satisfactory state of things so far confirmed as to afford assurance that it will be lasting, notwithstanding my departure, I shall not entertain any idea of my own retirement so long as I have bodily and mental health sufficient for the performance of the duties of my office."

As the year advanced his sufferings increased. In June he wrote to the same cherished correspondent: "I have no hope of benefit from anything. The malady is gradually getting worse, although its progress from day to day is imperceptible. I cannot quit my post at present without the certainty of mischievous consequences, and must, therefore, perform my duty by remaining where I am, whatever may be the result to myself personally." But, although he wrote thus to one who, whether present or absent, had watched the disease in all its stages, he was in the habit of describing his state lightly, and even jestingly, to his relatives and old correspondents. "A life of perpetual chloride of zinc," he wrote to one of them, "is far from an easy one. There are, however, greater pains and afflictions in the world, and I ought to be grateful for the

many mercies that I have experienced. . . . The doctor has just been with me, and says that the face looks very satisfactory. N.B. I can't shut my right one, and after the next application I shall not be able to open my mouth—‘ very satisfactory.’ ” But, in spite of all this, he went on unflinchingly at his work. His intellect was never brighter, his courage and resolution never stronger. The despatches which he dictated at this time are amongst the best to which he ever attached his name. But it was plainly not the decree of Providence that he should have human strength to struggle on much longer.

1845.

But even then there were great compensations. He felt ^{The Peerage.} that he was doing his duty, and he knew that his devotion to the public service was recognised both by the Queen and her ministers. During the space of forty-five years he had toiled unremittingly for the good of the State, in foreign lands and under hostile skies; he had scarcely known either home or rest. And now he was about to receive his reward. It came in a shape very welcome to him, for the fire of ambition had burnt within him ever since the boyish days when he had paced the Eton cloisters and indulged in day-dreams of future fame. In the midst of a life rendered endurable only by a feeling that he was doing some good to his fellows, and that it was God’s will thus to afflict him, letters came to him from Lord Stanley and Sir Robert Peel, informing him that it was her Majesty’s desire to raise him to the Peerage as soon as he had communicated to Government his choice of a title. He elected to be called by his own ancestral name. He appreciated the honour. He accepted it gratefully. But he felt that it was “too late.”

This honourable recognition of his past services would have sustained and strengthened him, for the stimulus of gratitude was thus added to his other incentives to exertion, if it had been possible for the strong spirit to prevail against the failure of the frail flesh. There were political circumstances which in the early summer of 1845 seemed to render it expedient that Metcalfe should remain at his post. “It will be seen,” he wrote in May to the Colonial Secretary, “from the description of parties which I have submitted, that the two parties in Lower and Upper Canada, which I regard as dis-

1845. affected, have a bitter animosity against me ; and if it should ever become necessary to admit these parties again into power, in preference to standing a collision with the Legislative Assembly, a case would arise in which my presence here might be rather prejudicial than beneficial, as it would be impossible for me to place the slightest confidence in the leaders of these parties. If any such necessity should occur in my time, it would cause an embarrassment much more serious to me than any difficulty that I have hitherto had to encounter. Whatever my duty might dictate I trust I should be ready to perform ; but I cannot contemplate the possibility of co-operating with any satisfaction to myself with men of whom I entertain the opinions that I hold with regard to the leaders of these parties. Such an embarrassment will not be impossible if any portion of the present majority fall off or become insensible of the necessity of adhering together. It is with a view to avert such a calamity that I consider my continuance at my post to be important at the present period, as a change in the head of the Government might easily lead to the result which I deprecate, and which it will be my study to prevent as long as I see any prospect of success." So he struggled on all through the summer months, doing the best he could, but feeling, at the same time, that his public usefulness was impaired by his physical condition, and that it was chiefly the moral influence of his presence in Canada that enabled him to be of service to the Crown.

The autumn of that year found him more afflicted and more helpless than he had ever been before. Still he was unwilling to resign, but he believed it to be his duty to report to the Queen's ministers that his resignation might soon be inevitable. On the 13th of October he wrote to Lord Stanley : " My disorder has recently made a serious advance, affecting my articulation and all the functions of the mouth ; there is a hole through the cheek into the interior of the mouth. My doctors warn me that it may soon be physically impossible for me to perform the duties of my office. If the season were not so far advanced towards the winter, I should feel myself under the necessity of requesting your Lordship to relieve me ; but as such an arrangement might require time and deliberation, I propose to struggle on as well as I can, and will address

1845.

your Lordship again on this subject according to any further changes that may occur in my condition ; in the mean while, I have considered it to be my duty to apprise your Lordship of the probable impossibility of my performing my official functions, in order that you may be prepared to make such an arrangement as may seem to be most expedient for the public service." And again on the 29th : " I continue in the same bodily state that I described by the last mail. I am unable to entertain company or to receive visitors, and my official business with public functionaries is transacted at my residence in the country instead of the apartment assigned for that purpose in the public buildings in town. I am consequently conscious that I am inadequately performing the duties of my office, and if there were time to admit of my being relieved before the setting in of the winter, I should think that the period had arrived when I might, perfectly in consistence with public duty, solicit to be relieved ; but, as the doctors say that I cannot be removed with safety from this place during the winter, and as that season is fast approaching, it becomes a question whether I can best perform my duty to my country by working on at the head of the Government to the best of my ability until the spring, or by delivering over charge to other hands, and remaining here as a private individual until the season may admit of my return to Europe with safety. In this dilemma I have hitherto abstained from submitting my formal resignation of my office, and shall continue to report by each successive mail as to my condition and capability of carrying on the duties of my post."

To the first of these letters Lord Stanley, whose kindly Resignation sympathies and genial praises had cheered Metcalfe alike in seasons of political anxieties and in hours of physical pain, returned the following characteristic answer : " I have received the Queen's commands to express to your Lordship the deep concern with which her Majesty learns that the state of your health is such as to render it necessary for you to tender to her Majesty the resignation of the high and arduous office the duties of which you have so ably fulfilled. Her Majesty is aware that your devotion to her service has led you, amidst physical sufferings beneath which ordinary men would have given way, to remain at your post to the last possible moment.

The Queen highly estimates this proof of your public spirit; and in accepting your proffered resignation, which in the present circumstances she feels it impossible to decline, her Majesty has commanded me to express her entire approval of the ability and prudence with which you have conducted the affairs of a very difficult Government, her sense of the loss which the public service is about to sustain by your retirement, and her deep regret for the cause which renders it unavoidable. These sentiments, I assure you, are fully participated in by myself and the other members of her Majesty's Government. I shall take early steps for the selection of your permanent successor, though it is probable that some time must elapse before he may be able to relieve you. In the mean time, you will consider the acceptance of your resignation as taking effect from the period, whenever that may be, at which you see fit to hand over the government provisionally to Earl Cathcart."

But even then, in his heroic constancy, he would not decide for himself; he would not desert those who had stood by him in the great constitutional conflict which had recently agitated the colony. It was necessary, however, as the autumn advanced, that the decision should be formed, for the setting in of the winter would have closed the navigation of the river and rendered impossible his departure before the spring. So he called his ministry together at the country-house near Montreal, in which he was then residing, and placed the matter wholly in their hands. "It was a scene," writes the biographer of Lord Metcalfe, "never to be forgotten by any who were present, on this memorable occasion, in the Governor-General's sheltered room. Some were dissolved in tears. All were agitated by a strong emotion of sorrow and sympathy, mingled with a sort of wondering admiration of the heroic constancy of their chief. He told them, that if they desired his continuance at the head of the Government—if they believed that the cause for which they had fought together so manfully would suffer by his departure, and that they therefore counselled him to remain at his post, he would willingly abide by their decision; but that the Queen had graciously signified her willingness that he should be relieved, and that he doubted much whether the adequate performance

1815.

of his duties, as the chief ruler of so extensive and important a province, had not almost ceased to be a physical possibility. It need not be said what was their decision. They besought him to depart, and he consented. A nobler spectacle than that of this agonised man resolutely offering to die at his post, the world has seen only once before."

So Lord Metcalfe returned to England, and before him lay ^{Last days in England} the great object of his ambition—a seat in the Legislative Assembly of the Empire. But he felt that it was not the decree of Providence that he should ever lift up his voice in defence of those cherished principles which lay so near to his heart. He had written from Canada to his sister, saying : "There was a time when I should have rejoiced in a peerage, as affording me the privilege of devoting the remainder of my life to the service of my Queen and country in the House of Lords—in my mind a most honourable and independent position ; but I doubt now whether I shall ever be able to undertake that duty with any degree of efficiency. My gratification, therefore, is confined to the pleasure which must be derived from so distinguished a mark of approbation of my public services, and to that of knowing that some kind hearts will rejoice at my elevation. The mere rank and title, if divested by infirmities of the power of rendering useful service in the House of Lords, will be encumbrance, and will not add one jot to the happiness which I still hope to enjoy in living in retirement with you." And now in England, with all the appliances of European science at his command, and amidst all the restorative influences of perfect repose and the gentle ministrations of loving friends, it seemed less than ever to be God's will that he should take his place among the "orators discussing important topics in the Senate House." A few more months of pain and it would all be over.

But with the pain there was no sorrow. There was infinite peace and a beautiful resignation within him, and his habitual cheerfulness never wholly deserted him. He could still rejoice in the society of loving friends and in the kind words which came to him from a distance. Among other compensations of this kind were the public addresses which were voted to him—addresses striving to congratulate, but coming only to console—which greeted him in his retirement. A great meet-

1846. ing of the “Civil and Military Servants of the East India Company and others personally connected with India” was held at the Oriental Club. Men who had held all kinds of honourable positions in India, from Governor-General downwards, vied with each other in doing honour to the veteran statesman. Among them, as he himself afterwards wrote, were “some whose public service he had had the honour of superintending, some with whom he had co-operated as colleagues, some who as schoolffellows had known him from boyhood, some who as contemporaries had been engaged in the same field, and many who, without his personal acquaintance, had nevertheless concurred to do him honour.” The names appended to the address were so numerous, that when the parchment was unrolled before him it covered the floor of his room. He received it with deep emotion. “It is easy,” he said, “to bear up against ill-usage, but such kindness quite overcomes me.” In the written answer, which he returned to this address, he said : “Had I retired from the colonial service of my country with health to enable me to discharge other public functions, it would have been the highest satisfaction to me to devote the rest of my life to those duties in the Legislature devolving on the rank to which I have been elevated by our most gracious sovereign ; but as it appears to be the will of the Almighty that sickness and infirmity should be the lot of my remaining days, I shall in that state cherish the recollection of your kindness as one of the greatest blessings I can enjoy. Proud of my relation with the services in India, in which so many eminent men have been formed and are continually rising, it is a source of indescribable pleasure to me that the approbation accorded to my efforts in other quarters should meet with sympathy from those personally connected with that splendid portion of the British Empire, and that one of the last acts of my public life should be to convey to you my grateful sense of the generous sentiments which you entertain.” To an address received about the same time from the inhabitants of Calcutta, who had built in his honour the Metcalfe Hall, he replied in a few brief but touching sentences, in which he spoke of the infirmities which beset him and the hopeless state of his health, and concluded by saying, “My anxious hope that prosperity and every other blessing

may attend you will accompany me to the grave, which lies open at my feet."

1846.

This was written in July. The end was, indeed, rapidly approaching. He was then at Malshanger Park, near Basingstoke. His sister, Mrs. Smythe, and other dear friends were with him. To the last his courage and resolution were conspicuous. He would not be confined to the sick-room, but moved about, and without help, as long as motion was possible,* and desired that everything should go on in his house as if no change were approaching.† He was sensible of increasing weakness; but he was anxious to hide his sufferings from the eyes of others, and never at any time was the unselfishness of his nature more apparent than when the hand of death was upon him. His loving-kindness towards others was as beautiful as the patience which clothed him as with a garment; and in the extremity of his own sufferings he had ever a heart to feel for the sufferings of others, and a hand to help and to relieve. And so, gentle and genial and courteous to the last, he passed away from the scene, solaced beyond all by the word of God that was read to him, and by the sweet sounds of his sister's harp. The bodily anguish which had so long afflicted him ceased; perfect peace was upon him; and a calm sweet smile settled down on his long-tortured face, as with an assured belief in the redeeming power of Christ's blood, he gave back his soul to his Maker.

* "On the 4th of September, Lord Metcalfe, for the first time, did not leave his sleeping apartment. The extreme debility of the sufferer forbade any exertion. There was little apparent change except in a disinclination to take the nourishment offered to him. On the following morning, however, the change was very apparent. It was obvious that he was sinking fast. Unwilling to be removed to his bed, he sat for the greater part of the day in a chair, breathing with great difficulty. In the afternoon he sent for the members of his family, laid his hands upon their heads as they knelt beside him, and breathed the blessing which he could not utter. Soon afterwards he was conveyed to his bed. . . The last sounds which reached him were the sweet strains of his sister's harp . . How

sweet those sounds are!" he was heard to whisper almost with his dying breath'—*Life of Lord Metcalfe*

† "He seemed unwilling to do or to suffer anything that would bring the sad truth painfully to the minds of others. He wished, therefore, that everything should go on in his household as though his place were not soon to be empty. He would converse cheerfully on all passing topics, public and private, and his keen sense of humour was unclouded to the last"—*Life and Correspondence of Lord Metcalfe*. The biographer adds: "A friend writing to me regarding Lord Metcalfe's last days, says 'A month before his death I have seen him laugh as heartily at a joke in *Punch* as the stoutest of us'"

1846. He was buried in the family vault of the Metcalfes, in the little parish church of Winkfield, near his paternal estate ; and there may be seen a tablet to his memory bearing the following inscription, inspired by the genius of Macaulay. Both are summed up, in the monumental record, with so much beauty and truth, it leaves nothing to be said about the career or the character of Charles Metcalfe.

Near this Stone is Laid

CHARLES THEOPHILUS, FIRST AND LAST LORD METCALFE,
 A STATESMAN TRIED IN MANY HIGH POSTS AND DIFFICULT CONJUNCTURES,
 AND FOUND EQUAL TO ALL
 THE THREE GREATEST DEPENDENCIES OF THE BRITISH CROWN
 WERE SUCCESSIVELY ENTRUSTED TO HIS CARE
 IN INDIA HIS FORTITUDE, HIS WISDOM, HIS PROBITY, AND HIS
 MODERATION
 ARE HELD IN HONOURABLE REMEMBRANCE
 BY MEN OF MANY RACES, LANGUAGES, AND RELIGIONS
 IN JAMAICA, STILL CONVULSED BY A SOCIAL REVOLUTION,
 HE CALMED THE EVIL PASSIONS
 WHICH LONG SUFFERING HAD ENGENDERED IN ONE CLASS,
 AND LONG DOMINATION IN ANOTHER.
 IN CANADA, NOT YET RECOVERED FROM THE CALAMITIES OF CIVIL WAR,
 HE RECONCILED CONTENDING FACTIONS
 TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE MOTHER COUNTRY.
 PUBLIC ESTEEM WAS THE JUST REWARD OF HIS PUBLIC VIRTUE,
 BUT THOSE ONLY WHO ENJOYED THE PRIVILEGE OF HIS FRIENDSHIP
 COULD APPRECIATE THE WHOLE WORTH OF HIS GENTLE AND
 NOBLE NATURE.
 COSTLY MONUMENTS IN ASIATIC AND AMERICAN CITIES
 ATTEST THE GRATITUDE OF NATIONS WHICH HE RULED ;
 THIS TABLET RECORDS THE SORROW AND THE PRIDE
 WITH WHICH HIS MEMORY IS CHERISHED BY PRIVATE AFFECTION.

HE WAS BORN THE 30TH DAY OF JANUARY, 1785
 HE DIED THE 5TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1846.

APPENDIX.

(*Note*, p. 59.)

STATE OF THE COMPANY'S SERVICE IN 1765.

LORD CLIVE TO THE COURT OF DIRECTORS.

Calcutta, September 30, 1765.

GENTLEMEN,—

* * * * * UPON my arrival, I am sorry to say I found your affairs in a condition so nearly desperate as would have alarmed any set of men whose sense of honour and duty to their employers had not been estranged by the too eager pursuit of their own immediate advantage. The sudden, and, among many, the unwarrantable acquisition of riches, had introduced luxury in every shape, and in its most pernicious excess. These two enormous evils went hand in hand together through the whole Presidency, infecting almost every member of each department. Every inferior seemed to have grasped at wealth, that he might be enabled to assume the spirit of profusion, which was now the only distinction between him and his superior. Thus all distinction ceased, and every rank became, in a manner, upon an equality. Nor was this the end of the mischief, for a contest of such a nature among your servants necessarily destroyed all proportion between their wants and the honest means of satisfying them. In a country where money is plenty, where fear is the principle of government, and where your arms are ever victorious; in such a country, I say, it is no wonder that corruption should find its way to a spot so well prepared to receive it. It is no wonder that the lust of riches should readily embrace the proffered means of its gratification, or that the instruments of your power should avail themselves of their authority, and proceed even to extortion in those cases where simple corruption could not keep pace with their rapacity. Examples of this sort, set by superiors,

could not fail of being followed in a proportionate degree by inferiors. The evil was contagious, and spread among both civil and military, down to the writer, the ensign, and the free merchant

The large sums of money acquired by donation, besides the means I have already mentioned, were so publicly known and vindicated, that every one thought he had a right to enrich himself, at all events, with as much expedition as possible. The monopoly of salt, betel, tobacco, &c., was another fund of immense profits to the Company's servants, and likewise to such others as they permitted to enjoy a share, while not a rupee of advantage accrued to the Government, and very little to the Company, from that trade. Before I had discovered the various sources of wealth, I was under great astonishment to find individuals so suddenly enriched, that there was scarce a gentleman in the settlement who had not fixed upon a very short period for his return to England with affluence. From hence arose that froward spirit of independency which, in a manner, set all your orders at defiance, and dictated a total contempt of them as often as obedience was found incompatible with private interest. At the time of my arrival, I saw nothing that bore the form or appearance of government. The authority and pre-eminence of the Governor were levelled with those of the Councillors; every Councillor was as much a Governor as he who bore the name, and distinction of rank, as I have already observed, was no longer to be found in the whole settlement.

Notwithstanding a special order from the Court of Directors, founded on very wise and very evident reasons, that all correspondence with the country powers should be carried on solely in the Governor's name, I found that our whole correspondence with the Great Mogul, the Soubahs, Nabobs, and Rajahs had been of late carried on by, and in the name of, the whole Board, and that every servant and free merchant corresponded with whom they pleased.

Your orders for the execution of the covenants were positive, and expressly mentioned to be the resolution of a General Court of Proprietors; your servants at Bengal, however, absolutely determined to reject them, and had not the Select Committee resolved that the example should be first set by the Council, or a suspension from your service take place, it is certain they would have remained unexecuted to this hour. You will not, I imagine, be much surprised at this breach of duty if you look over the general letters, where you cannot avoid seeing how many are annually committed, and how fast everything was tending to a contempt of your authority.

From a short survey of the late transactions, I was convinced that no other remedy was left than an immediate and vigorous exertion of the powers with which the Committee were invested. Happy, in my opinion, was it for the Company that such powers were granted, for that the settlement, so conducted, could have subsisted another twelvemonth, appears to me an impossibility. A great part of the revenues of the country, amounting to near four millions sterling per annum, would have been divided among your servants, and the acquisition of fortunes being so sudden, a few months must have brought writers into Council. Seniority must have been admitted as a just claim to a seat at the Board, without the qualification of age or experience, because the rapidity of succession denied the attainment of either.

Nor were these excesses confined to your civil servants alone, the military department also had caught the infection, and riches, the bane of discipline, were daily promoting the ruin of your army. The too little inequality of rank rendered the advantages of captains, lieutenants, and ensigns so nearly upon a par, and so large, that an independent fortune was no distant prospect even to a sub-altern. If a too quick succession among those from whom you expect the study of commerce and polity is detrimental to your civil concerns, how effectually destructive must that evil prove to your military operations! The most experienced European officer, when he has entered into the East India Service, although he may be able in many points to suggest improvement to others, will, nevertheless, find that something new remains for himself to learn peculiar to this service which cannot be attained in a day. Judge, then, how the case must stand with youths, who are either first sent out from the academy, or, which more frequently happens, who have had no education at all; for to such have we often been reduced to the necessity of granting commissions. How much must the expectations of your army be raised, when they are suffered, without control, to take possession, for themselves, of the whole booty, donation money, and plunder, on the capture of a city? This, I can assure you, happened at Benares; and, what is more surprising, the then Governor and Council, so far from laying in a claim to the moiety which ought to have been reserved for the Company, agreeable to those positive orders from the Court of Directors a few years ago, when they were pleased to put their forces upon the same footing with those of his Majesty, gave up the whole to the captors. You have heard of the general mutiny that happened among your Sepoys a little before my arrival. What

would have been your consternation had you also heard of the unanimous desertion of your European soldiery? These were very serious events indeed, and had it not been for one well-timed vigorous act of Major Munro, and the unwearied zeal and military abilities of General Carnac, who totally suppressed the spirit of mutiny among the soldiers, your possessions in India might at this time have been destitute of a man to support them, and even the privilege of commerce irrecoverably crushed. Common justice to the principles of General Carnac oblige me further to add, that I found him the only officer of rank who had resisted the temptations to which, by his station, he was constantly subject—of acquiring an immense fortune; and I question much whether he is not the only man who has of late years been honoured with the command of your forces without acquiring a very large independency. The letter from the Great Mogul to the Governor and Council, requesting their permission for him to accept a present of two lakhs, which his Majesty is desirous of bestowing on him as a reward for his disinterested services, will corroborate what I have said in his favour; and as this affair, agreeable to the tenor of the covenants, is referred to the Court of Directors, I make no doubt they will readily embrace the opportunity of showing their regard to such distinguished merit by consenting to his acceptance of his Majesty's bounty.

If the picture I have drawn be a faithful likeness of this Presidency—and I call upon the most guilty, for guilty there are, to show that I have aggravated a feature—to what a deplorable condition must your affairs have soon been reduced? Every State (and such now is your Government in India) must be near its period, when the rage of luxury and corruption has seized upon its leaders and inhabitants. Can trade be encouraged for public benefit where the management, unfortunately, devolves upon those who make private interest their rule of action? And, further, has sudden affluence ever failed, from the infancy of military discipline to the present perfection of it, to corrupt the principle and destroy the spirit of an army? Independency of fortune is always averse to those duties of subordination which are inseparable from the life of a soldier, and in this country, if the acquisition be sudden, a relaxation of discipline is more immediately the consequence. I would not be thought, by these observations, to exclude riches from the military; honour alone is scarcely a sufficient reward for the toilsome service of the field. But the acquisition of wealth ought to be so gradual as to admit not a prospect of completing it till succession, by merit, to the rank of a field-officer should have laid a good foundation for the

claim. Such is the idea I entertained of this matter when I delivered my sentiments to the Court of Directors in my letter of the 27th of April, 1764, and I have acted in conformity thereto by re-arranging the troops in the manner I then proposed. I need not repeat the observations I troubled you with in that letter. It is sufficient to remark here that the good effects of the plan are already visible—that subordination is restored, abuses corrected, and your expenses, of course, already greatly diminished.

The war, which, to my great concern, I found extended above seven hundred miles from the Presidency, is now happily concluded, and a peace established upon terms which promise lasting tranquillity to these provinces. This event has, I find, disappointed the expectations of many who thought of nothing but a march with the King to Delhi. My resolution, however, was, and my hopes will always be, to confine our assistance, our conquests, and our possessions to Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa. To go farther is, in my opinion, a scheme so extravagantly ambitious and absurd, that no Governor and Council in their senses can ever adopt it unless the whole system of the Company be first entirely new modelled.

I forbear troubling you with a detail of the negotiations of General Carnac and me with the country powers, and the particulars of the treaty of peace with the Vizier of the empire, as they will be spoken of at large in the letter from the Select Committee, and appear likewise upon the face of our proceedings. I will, however, just remark, that our restoring to Shuja Doula the whole of his dominions proceeds more from the policy of not extending the Company's territorial possessions than the generous principle of attaching him for ever to our interest by gratitude, though this has been the apparent, and is by many thought to be the real, motive. Had we ambitiously attempted to retain the conquered country, experience would soon have proved the absurdity and impracticability of such a plan. The establishment of your army must have been largely increased, a considerable number of civil servants must have been added to your list, and more chiefships appointed; the acts of oppression and innumerable abuses which would have been committed, and which could neither have been prevented nor remedied at so great a distance from the Presidency, must infallibly have laid the foundation of another war destructive and unsuccessful; our old privileges and possessions would have been endangered by every supply we might have been tempted to afford in support of the new, and the natives must have finally triumphed in our inability to sustain the weight of our own ambition.

To return to the point from which this digression has led me, I must carry you back to the description above given of the situation in which I found your affairs on my arrival. Two paths were evidently open to me : the one smooth and strewed with abundance of rich advantages that might easily be picked up, the other untrodden and every step opposed with obstacles. I might have taken charge of the government upon the same footing on which I found it—that is, I might have enjoyed the name of Governor, and have suffered the honour, importance, and dignity of the post to continue in their state of annihilation ; I might have contented myself, as others had before me, with being a cipher, or, what is little better, the first among sixteen equals, and I might have allowed this passive conduct to be attended with the usual douceur of sharing largely with the rest of the gentlemen in all donations, perquisites, &c., arising from the absolute government, and disposal of all places in the revenues of this opulent kingdom, by which means I might soon have acquired an immense addition to my fortune, notwithstanding the obligations in the new covenants ; for the man who can so easily get over the bar of conscience as to receive presents after the execution of them, will not scruple to make use of any evasions that may protect him from the consequence. The settlement in general would thus have been my friends, and only the natives of the country my enemies. If you can conceive a Governor in such a situation, it is impossible to form a wrong judgment of the inferior servants, or of the Company's affairs at such a Presidency An honourable alternative, however, lay before me. I had the power within my own breast to fulfil the duty of my station by remaining incorruptible in the midst of numberless temptations artfully thrown in my way, by exposing my character to every attack which malice or resentment are so apt to invent against any man who attempts reformation, and by encountering, of course, the odium of the settlement I hesitated not a moment which choice to make ; I took upon my shoulders a burden which required resolution, perseverance, and constitution to support Having chosen my part, I was determined to exert myself in the attempt, happy in the reflection that the honour of the nation and the very being of the Company would be maintained by the success, and conscious that if I failed my integrity and good intentions at least must remain unimpeached. The other members of the Committee joined with me in opinion that, in order to proceed upon business, it was absolutely necessary for us to assume the powers wherewith we were invested. We saw plainly that most of the gentlemen in Council had been too deeply concerned themselves

in the measures which required amendment for us to expect any assistance from them; on the contrary, we were certain of finding opposition to every plan of innovation, and an unanimous attempt to defeat the intentions of the Proprietors, who solicited my acceptance of the government. The Committee, therefore, immediately met, and I had the happiness to find myself supported by gentlemen whom no temptations could seduce, no inconveniences or threats of malice deter. Our proceedings will convince you that we have dared to act with firmness and integrity, and will, at the same time, demonstrate that temper, unanimity, and despatch must ever mark the proceedings of men unbiased by private interest

The gentlemen in Council, of late years, at Bengal, seem to have been actuated in every consultation by a very obstinate and mischievous spirit. The office of Governor has been, in a manner, hunted down, stripped of its dignity, and then divided into sixteen shares. Whether ambition, obstinacy, pride, or self-interest, is usually the motive to such a pursuit I will not take upon me to determine, but am sure it can never arise from a just idea of government, or a true sense of the Company's interest. In my opinion, it is the duty of the Council to make the powers of the President appear as extensive as possible in the eyes of the people; that all correspondence with the country Princes should be carried on through him alone, some particular cases excepted; that the Council should upon all occasions be unanimous in supporting not in extenuating the dignity of his station, and that he ought to be considered among the natives as the sole manager and conductor of political affairs. This should be the outward appearance of administration, though in reality the Council must be allowed a freedom of judgment, and when they perceive in the Governor a tendency to absolute or unjustifiable measures, it then becomes their duty to check him. If they at any time have reason to distrust the rectitude of his principles, they should not allow him to execute designs, even of the smallest moment, without previously laying them before the Board and obtaining their approbation. In short, the best Governor should not, except in cases of necessity, be suffered to conclude any points of importance without the sanction of the Board. But the expedient of a Select Committee equally prevents any ill conduct in the Governor, and is, besides, attended with advantages which can rarely be expected from the whole body of Councillors, five gentlemen well versed in the Company's true interest, of abilities to plan and resolution to execute; gentlemen whose fortunes are honourably approaching to affluence, and whose

integrity has never suffered them to exceed the bounds of moderation. A Select Committee composed of such men will transact more business in a week than the Council can in a month. The opinions and judgment of five men are as securely to be relied on, even in affairs of the utmost consequence, as sixteen. They are less liable to dissension, and it may be said beyond a contradiction, that their administration is more distant from democratic anarchy. The Council, however, would not be a useless body; for whilst the attention of the Committee was chiefly engaged in watching and repairing the mainsprings of government, the Council would as materially serve the Company in attending to the many other movements of the grand machine, which are as essentially necessary to the public advantage and security. And that the Committee should not be able to carry their powers to any dangerous length, they might be ordered annually, before the despatch of the Europe ships, to submit their proceedings to the review of the gentlemen in Council, who might transmit their opinions thereupon to the Court of Directors. Your present Select Committee have from time to time laid most of their proceedings before Council, and we intend to continue the same system of candour, except in any political cases of secrecy, when prudence may require that our resolutions should be confined to the knowledge of a few.

Thus freely I have given you my opinions upon the sort of government I could wish to see established in this settlement, nor shall I think my duty done till I have pointed out every measure that seems to me best calculated to preserve your affairs from destruction. At Bengal, the rule of succession among your servants is perniciously exact: there are frequent occasions where it ought to be set aside—where experience, understanding, integrity, moderation, ought to take place of accidental seniority. The demerits of most of your superior servants have been so great, as you will learn from the Committee's proceedings, that one can hardly imagine their future behaviour will entitle them to further favours than you have hitherto bestowed on them. I do not pretend to surmise what sentence you may pronounce upon the gentlemen who came under the censure of the Committee, but whether it be moderate as ours, or severe as it deserves, it will not much concern them, since all of them are now in very affluent circumstances, and will probably return to Europe by this or the next year's shipping. Peruse, then, the list of your covenanted servants upon this establishment. You will find that many of those next in succession are not only very young in the service, and consequently unfit for such exalted

stations, but are also strongly tainted with the principles of their superiors. If your opinion should correspond with mine, some remedy will be judged necessary to be applied, and I confess I see but one. The unhappy change which within these few years has arisen in the manners and conduct of your servants at Bengal, is alone sufficient to remove the objections I once had to appointments from another settlement; and the difficulty which now too plainly appears of filling up vacancies in Council with the requisite attention to the Company's honour and welfare, inclines me to wish such appointments more frequent. In the present state of this Presidency, no measure can, I think, prove more salutary than to appoint five or six gentlemen from the Court to the Bengal establishment, and there to post them agreeable to their rank and standing in the service. Messrs. Russell, Floyer, Aldersey, and Kelsall, are among those who would be well worthy your attention, should this plan be adopted. I cannot help further recommending to your consideration, whether, if every other method should be found ineffectual, the transplanting a few of the young Bengal servants to Madras would not be of signal service both to themselves and the Company. You will likewise consider whether the settlement of Bombay is capable of furnishing us with a few meritorious servants. With regard to Madras, the conduct of the gentlemen upon that establishment is in general so unexceptionable, that to present Bengal with such examples of regularity, discretion, and moderation, would, I think, be a means of restoring it to good order and government. It is past a doubt, that every attempt of reformation must fail, unless the superior servants be exemplary in their principles and conduct. If we see nothing but incapacity among Councillors, in vain shall we look for moderation among writers.

The sources of tyranny and oppression which have been opened by the European agents acting under the authority of the Company's servants, and the numberless black agents and sub-agents acting also under them, will, I fear, be a lasting reproach to the English name in this country. It is impossible to enumerate the complaints that have been laid before me by the unfortunate inhabitants, who had not forgot that I was an enemy to oppression. The necessity of securing the confidence of the natives is an idea I have ever maintained, and was in hopes would be invariably adopted by others; but ambition, success, and luxury, have, I find, introduced a new system of politics at the severe expense of English honour, of the Company's faith, and of common justice and humanity. The orders so frequently issued, that no writers shall have

the privilege of dustucks, I have strictly obeyed, but I am sorry to inform you that all the wished-for consequences are not to be expected. Officers of the Government are so sensible of our influence and authority, that they dare not presume to search or stop a boat protected by the name of a Company's servant; and you may be assured that frauds of that kind, so easy to be practised and so difficult to be detected, are but too frequent. I have at last, however, the happiness to see the completion of an event which in this respect, as well as in many others, must be productive of advantages hitherto unknown, and at the same time prevent abuses that have hitherto had no remedy I mean the Dewannce, which is the superintendency of all the lands, and the collection of all the revenues, of the Provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. The assistance which the Great Mogul had received from our arms and treasury, made him readily bestow this grant upon the Company, and it is done in the most effectual manner you can desire. The allowance for the support of the Nabob's dignity and power, and tribute to his Majesty, must be regularly paid, the remainder belongs to the Company. Revolutions are now no longer to be apprehended; the means of effecting them will, in future, be wanting to ambitious Mussulmans, nor will your servants, civil or military, be tempted to foment disturbances, from whence can arise no benefit to themselves. Restitution, donation money, &c. &c., will be perfectly abolished, as the revenues from whence they used to issue will be possessed by ourselves. The power of supervising the provinces, though lodged in us, should not, however, in my opinion, be exerted. Three times the present number of civil servants would be insufficient for the purpose; whereas, if we leave the management to the old officers of the Government, the Company need not be at the expense of one additional servant, and though we may suffer in the collection, yet we shall always be able to detect and punish any great offenders, and shall have some satisfaction in knowing that the corruption is not among ourselves. By this means, also, the abuses inevitably springing from the exercise of territorial authority will be effectually obviated; there will still be a Nabob with an allowance suitable to his dignity, and the territorial jurisdiction will still be in the chiefs of the country acting under him and the Presidency in conjunction, though the revenues will belong to the Company. Besides, were the Company's officers to be the collectors, foreign nations would immediately take umbrage, and complaints, preferred to the British Court, might be attended with very embarrassing consequences. Nor can it be supposed that either the French,

Dutch, or Danes will acknowledge the English Company Nabob of Bengal, and pay into the hands of their servants the duties upon trade, or the quit-rents of those districts which they have for many years possessed by virtue of the royal firman, or by grants from former Nabobs.

Having thus fully submitted to you my sentiments on the civil department, permit me to trouble you with a few observations on the military, which deserves a no less serious attention. In the former part of this letter I have mentioned that luxury and an abhorrence of subordination had overspread your army, but that the good effects of appointing field-officers had already become visible. The Committee's letter will enclose a general return of their number, and enlarge upon the necessity of keeping each regiment complete to the establishment; I therefore avoid saying anything here upon those subjects. That letter will also specify the proportion of emoluments proposed for the field-officers from the new acquired advantages upon salt. The same objection may, perhaps, be made to this, which I supposed was likely to occur with respect to the plan for the benefit of the civil servants. If so, I beg leave to refer you to my proposal and remarks upon that subject, which are equally proper and applicable to this. These points, then, I conclude, are sufficiently before you, and I proceed to recommend to your consideration that the regimenting of the troops has introduced a much larger number of officers of rank than has hitherto been admitted upon your establishment, and that this regulation, beneficial and necessary as it is, will, notwithstanding, be productive of one dangerous evil, if not constantly guarded against by the authority of the Governor and Council, supported and enforced by the higher powers at home. The evil I mean to apprise you of is the encroachment of the military upon the civil jurisdiction, and an attempt to be independent of their authority. A spirit of this kind has always been visible; our utmost vigilance, therefore, is requisite to suppress it, or at least to take care that it shall not actually prevail. I have been at some pains to inculcate a total subjection of the army to the Government, and I doubt not that you will ever maintain that principle. In the field, in time of actual service, I could wish to see the Commander of your forces implicitly relied on for his plan of operations. Orders from the Presidency may frequently embarrass him and prejudice the service. At such a time, he is certainly the best judge of what measures should be pursued, and ought, therefore, to be trusted with discretionary power. But he should by no means be permitted to vary from the fixed, general

plan of a campaign, nor from his own idea of the Company's interest, to prosecute operations of importance, when they are not also of real utility and emergency. I dwell not, however, entirely upon the conduct of a Commander of the forces, as such, in the field; he is to understand that upon all occasions a gentleman in Council is his superior, unless he also has a seat at the Board, and then he will, of course, rank as he stands in that appointment. The whole army should, in like manner, be subordinate to the civil power, and it is the indispensable duty of the Governor and Council to keep them so. If at any time they should struggle for superiority, the Governor and Council must strenuously exert themselves, ever mindful that they are the trustees for the Company in this settlement, and the guardians of public property under a civil institution.

It would give me pain to see a regulation so salutary as that of the appointment of field-officers attended with any inconveniences, and therefore I would earnestly recommend the following very easy and effectual mode of prevention. Let the equality in civil and military rank be immediately settled by the Court of Directors. Were disputes about precedence the only points to be adjusted, they would not be worth a moment's reflection, but we are to consider that opportunities will sometimes happen when military gentlemen may assume power and authority from the rank they hold among the civil servants, and perhaps pay no attention to orders issued from their supposed inferiors. Such contentions may have disagreeable consequences, and to prevent them I propose that all the Colonels (the Commander of the troops excepted, who is entitled to the rank of third in Council) shall be equal in rank to the Councillors, but always the youngest of that rank; the Lieutenant-Colonels should rank with Senior Merchants, the Majors with Junior Merchants, Captains with Factors, and Lieutenants and Ensigns with Writers. The rank of all officers below Colonels, and of Civil Servants below Councillors, may be considered according to the dates of their commissions and appointments respectively. When such a regulation has taken place, I think the appointment of field-officers cannot be charged with a single inconvenience. . . .

I must confess that I cannot be responsible for that discipline and reformation we mean shall take place, unless the field-officers are men I can depend upon. Most of the captains now in your service have had so little experience, and are, I fear, so liable to the general objection, that I could wish to have five or six captains sent out who have seen service, who understand discipline, and who

are well recommended by their colonels. If you should think proper to extend this plan to majors, it will be so much the better, but there is no occasion to go higher. . . .

The inquiries I have found myself under the necessity of promoting, the regulations which I judged proper should take place without delay, together with those I have here had the honour to propose for your mature deliberation, will, I doubt not, meet with that candid discussion which the importance of the subject requires. You will be pleased, upon the whole, to observe that the great object of my labour has been (and it must also be yours) to stem that torrent of luxury, corruption, and licentiousness, which have nearly overwhelmed the interest, and I might add the existence of the Company in these parts ; to reduce your civil servants to a sense of duty to their employers, and moderation in the pursuit of their own advantages ; to introduce discipline, subordination, economy into your army, and to prevent in general that sudden acquisition of riches which is evidently the root of almost every other evil, both in the civil and military departments.

Is there a man anxious for the speedy return of his son, his brother, or his friend, and solicitous to see that return accompanied by affluence of fortune, indifferent to the means by which it may have been obtained ? Is there one who, void of all but selfish feelings, can withhold his approbation of any plan that promises not sudden riches to those his dearest connexions, who can look with contempt upon measures of moderation, and who can cherish all upstart greatness, though stigmatised with the spoils of the Company ? If there is such a man, to him all arguments would be vain ; to him I speak not. My address is to those who can judge coolly of the advantages to be desired for their relations and friends, nor think the body corporate wholly unentitled to their attention. If these should be of opinion that an independent fortune, honourably acquired in a faithful service of twelve or fifteen years, is more compatible with the interests of the Company than the late rapidity of acquisitions, and at the same time satisfactory to the expectations of reason, I will venture to assert that the regulations already made, together with those proposed, will, when enforced by the authority of the Court of Directors, ensure to the Company their commercial and political advantages, and be productive of certain independency to every servant who endeavours to deserve it.

The general terms in which I have mentioned the depravity of this settlement oblige me to point out to your attention the instances—the very few instances—of distinguished merit among the

superior servants To find a man who, in the midst of luxury and licentiousness, had retained the true idea of commercial economy, who, inferior in fortune to most of your civil servants in the rank of Councillors, was yet superior to all in moderation and integrity, whose regard for the welfare of the public, and for the reputation of individuals, had made him warn others from falling into the temptations of corruption which he saw were approaching, and who could actually resist those temptations himself, when a share was allotted him of money he thought unwarrantably obtained—to find such a man in such a settlement, would appear incredible to those who are unacquainted with Mr. Verelst. I have represented this gentleman to you, as I would every one, in his real character, and shall only add, that if you wish to see the measures we are now pursuing supported with integrity, abilities, and resolution, you will endeavour to prevail on him to continue in your service, by appointing him to succeed Mr Sumner in the Government. To omit mentioning Mr Cartier would be injustice, as he also stands high in my opinion. His character is clear, and his attachment to your service what it ought to be—unbiased by any mean attention to his own advantages. I wish sincerely your list of superior servants would enable me to detain you longer on subjects of commendation, but I have finished the picture, and I cannot add another figure that deserves to be distinguished from the group. . . .

I shall conclude this tedious letter by observing, that my anxiety to know whether you approve of my conduct or not, can proceed from no other motive than my concern for the public, since I continue invariable in the resolution I formed, and expressed in a General Court, long before the covenants were proposed, of acquiring no addition to my fortune by my acceptance of the Government, and I beg leave also to assure you, that in order to obviate all suspicion of a collusion in this delicate point, I have not permitted either of the gentlemen of my family to hold an employment in your service, nor to receive presents, although they are not bound by covenants to the contrary. The small congratulatory nuzzuus, elephants, horses, &c., which I have been under a necessity of receiving, do not, I imagine, amount to any considerable sum, but whatever it may be, not a farthing shall go into my own pocket. I have hitherto been too much engaged in matters of public importance to attend to a particular valuation; but I have caused an exact account to be kept of every even the most trifling present, which at my return shall be submitted to your inspection,

and in the mean time the amount of the whole shall go towards defraying my extraordinary expenses as Governor. The only favour I have to solicit for myself is, that although your treasury here will for the future be so full as to render it difficult for individuals to obtain bills upon the Company, payable at home, you will be pleased to indulge me with the usual channel of remittance of my jagheers, until it reverts to the Company.

I have, &c.,
(Signed)

CLIVE.

(*Note*, p 388)

THE COLLEGE OF FORT WILLIAM.

THE REV D. BROWN TO CHARLES GRANT, Esq.

Calcutta, January 15, 1805.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I RECEIVED your letter from Berkshire in April last. The College is a painful subject, and I am loath to enter upon it; upon its defence, I shall certainly not think of entering. Too much, I fear, has been already said, and that no good purpose has been answered by elaborate discussions. The breach has been widened by the means that were intended to heal it, and I am apprehensive that anything I could say would only be attributed to ignorance, to interested motives, or to a participation in the prejudices of those who have undertaken the defence of the College.

I lament most sincerely the differences of opinion which have existed on various points between this Government and the Court of Directors, and the party spirit which has been fomented by intemperate proceedings. There has not, however, as you seem to apprehend, been evidenced here, so far as my observation has reached, anything like a tendency to dispute the authority of the Court, or to lower its reputation or claims to the grateful homage of the service. But much evil hath been done by letters of hostility from England, and by the publication of the third Report of the Special Committee, which could not fail to astound all those who know the purity and elevation of Lord Wellesley's character, and the upright principles by which his conduct has been directed.

But you know I am no politician, that I am a stranger to the

passions and disputes which agitate parties, and that I only judge of things from appearances, without being able to penetrate, at all times, the motives which give them birth.

When the College was founded I thought it was a glorious undertaking, and I calculated on no less than its being the means of giving the light of the Gospel to this land of darkness. My heart was in it, and I felt persuaded that He who said of Cyrus, "he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure," had put it into the heart of Lord Wellesley to begin this work.

Knowing little either of the world or its politics, I never dreamt of opposition or hostility from any quarter. I thought you, and as many as entertained the same religious views, would give it the most cordial support. And it appears the Court of Directors were never averse to a plan of their own, and that the opposition which has been made to Lord Wellesley's College originated in other considerations.

When the order for the abolition of the College came out, a member of the Board of Control wrote to his Lordship in these words: "My Lord, your letter on the private trade has upset your College." This appeared to me a very strange reason for upsetting it. I then saw clearly it would come to nothing, unless upheld by the arm of that Providence which I still believed had called it into existence.

Whether the College commenced in the most wise and prudent manner that could have been devised, I was no judge. Whether a proper building should be immediately prepared for the reception of the students, I had no doubt. If it had cost many lakhs, the benefit to be derived from it would have been so great as, in my mind, to have justified the measure. But these are not matters for me to discuss.

What is infinitely more to be regretted than the want of College walls, is the deadly wound the College has received by cutting off from it the Madras and Bombay students. This was like opening a great artery, which let out our blood and life. This fatal measure will never cease to be lamented by those who witnessed the happy effects which flowed from the union of the three Presidencies. The last of the students belonging to Madras and Bombay, who lately left us, parted from us with tears of grateful affection, and I understand they are considered in their respective Presidencies as a new order of beings, from whom the most important services are to be expected. They are, I think, the proper judges to be appealed to on this question. From the low state of morals and learning at the

inferior Presidencies, it is thought no efficient institution can be established at either of them

I would gladly pass unnoticed the slanders which have been propagated concerning the College, if my silence would not seem like allowing there was some truth in them

While politics were crushing the College at home, slander was undermining its foundations here. Its foes have been those of its own household! The old servants, almost universally, abhorred the College, and, while they pretended to favour it, wrote against it, or the pretended abuse of it, with much rancour. It was considered as a test of morals and learning not to be endured. They saw that the younger branches of the service would be raised to degrees of distinction which they could never attain, and that the mask would be taken off from ignorance and incapacity wherever they existed. Even the ablest officers of the Government apprehended that they would lose something of their consequence by the cheapening of their talents. Sir George Barlow is, perhaps, the only person who has viewed the College, from first to last, with a single eye, and has supported it with the purest zeal. We have seen prejudices wearing away fast, year after year. Many secret enmities have been subdued, and several of the heads of the service have become real converts and warm advocates for an institution which they would once have gladly seen destroyed. But while much of the old leaven remains, we may expect the College will continue to be evil spoken of by some. From the letters which have been published by the French at the Mauritius, or sent round here, we see what sort of letters must have been written home to produce such answers. Some persons much favoured have been guilty of this perfidious conduct. And I greatly fear that Lord Wellesley has always had too near him characters of a malignant caste, who, filled with hatred against his person and government, have basely defamed both in their private correspondence. I was once or twice agonised with a detestable story circulated by those who should have been silent if it had been true, but it was utterly false, and equal to any villainy that, I believe, was ever invented. I cannot bring myself to mention the circumstances, or they would not fail to convince you of what desperate wickedness some decent sort of people are capable. Some persons of this description, from pure enmity to Lord Wellesley, have defamed the College. The vices and misconduct of some young men who were never in the College have been imputed to the students of it; mere trifles have been magnified into serious crimes, the detail of which would show what slight foundations prejudice

can build upon. That gross immorality which once marked the Writers' Buildings as a sink of iniquity, has wholly disappeared I do not believe there is a school or university to be found where effective discipline is maintained like that which has preserved the morals of nine-tenths of the students of the College of Fort William. Hard study is the magic by which this has been chiefly effected Much more has been done by means of friendly counsel than could have been done by proctors' fines and privations If a few have miscaimed, I can name scores who have done nobly, and who will attribute their salvation from low vices and dissipated habits to the studies and discipline of the College

My testimony on this subject may, perhaps, be deemed partial; but I am not attempting a formal defence (which you will probably receive from other quarters), nor do I wish to claim for the College unmerited praise No part of the merit belongs to me I am, however, in a situation to judge what is justly due to the genius, talents, and industry of others. That Providence who, I still believe, put it into the heart of Lord Wellesley to lay the foundation, provided a wise master-builder to carry on the design in Mr. Buchanan. If I should say half I know to be due to his well-earned fame, I fear you would think my encomium somewhat extravagant. If the East India Company—if his country—should ever know the worth of his character, they will not pass it over without regard. I have been long an eye-witness of his pure and fervent zeal, of his able and prudent exertions, of his indefatigable attention and incessant labour in all the duties of his respective stations. It is but right I should say he has done all things well, both as a minister of Christ and a ruler of an institution as important as any the world ever saw. To him it must be ascribed that the College has attained so rapidly to perfection, for in some respects it will never attain to higher degrees of excellence.

With great concern we see his family torn from him a second time by sickness He probably will soon think it his duty to follow them, and the danger is, that when the College loses him, it will lose its mainspring, and as suddenly decline as we have seen it rise. I now perceive what an unspeakable advantage it would have been had some men of piety and learning (as Kempthorne, Bourdillon, and others) come out to us some years ago.

You know what sort of chaplains followed Mr Buchanan into this service, which is now stocked, for a long time to come. It is now clear what this Presidency has to look to in the way of succession.

But my thoughts are on the College at present, the future fate of which will much depend on the character of its immediate Governors. Though I have so little ability to be useful to it, I have some zeal for its prosperity, which I consider as inseparably connected with the interests of the East India Company, and, what is more, with the interests of true religion, and my zeal prompts me to suggest what now appears to be the only expedient left to preserve it in time to come. At the College examination on Monday last I was lamenting to Mr. Buchanan the want of proper men (such as those named above) to succeed us in office, and to fill the professorships. I hinted how admirably your second son would conduct this institution, if he could be prevailed on to accept the office. He replied that the College would yield him better fruit than the barren profession of the law, and begged me to propose instantly his own situation, which he wishes shortly to resign, and particularly as your son's talents so eminently qualify him for the classical professorship. I scarcely can imagine that he would be reconciled to such a line, or that you would think it eligible for him. But it struck me that your son Charles, who has been disabled from following his profession, might be prevailed on to turn his thoughts this way, for the sake of change of climate, which, no doubt, would be favourable to him, and I think the place which I hold would be acceptable to him on several accounts. Nor can I hope or wish for a greater blessing to the service than that one or both of them should be induced to accept the government of this College.

If, however, they are seeking higher things, I implore you to think of others as well qualified to appoint in their stead, and to do it while you are now in the chair.

I have little more to add on this subject, except that I beg leave to advertise you of the deplorable disadvantages under which those come out who are now appointed writers, without some previous knowledge of classics or a good stock of modern languages. An illiterate youth has no chance in this race. He must lag behind, and sink into worse than nothing. The few instances which have failed of late have all been of this description.

I suppose Mr. Udny returned your book, and I shall be glad to hear of its publication, as it would be of great use in preparing the way for a memoir which Mr. Buchanan is about to print. I shall ever regret that you allowed us no latitude in communicating the contents of your work to any one. I think Mr. Buchanan would have done for you work what you desired Mr. Udny and me to do, and not have laid a new foundation. In a few weeks after you re-

ceive this, his memoir will appear from the press, confirming all you have written, and proposing what appears expedient forthwith to be done. You will find a series of facts in support of the representations which you have given of the Hindoos, and of their idolatry, formally authenticated. The memoir is dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Its general title is, "Of the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India." I can give you the outline in a few words, for I have just revised the last sheet. It is in three parts

First, on the means of preserving the profession of the Christian religion among our countrymen in India

Under this head he gives a view of the present state of the English Church in India, of the present establishment of the Romish Church in the East, of the extent of the proposed ecclesiastical establishment for British India, and closed the first part with considerations deduced from the propriety or necessity of an ecclesiastical establishment; and, lastly, considers objections.

Second part is on the civilisation of the natives

Here he shows the practicability of civilising them, the policy of so doing, and the impediments in the way of their civilisation, particularly their sanguinary superstitions and numerous holidays

Part third, which is the most gratifying, is on the progress already made in civilising the natives of India. Here he treats of the extension of Christianity in India under the influence of episcopal jurisdiction, and, finally, of the extension of the same by the labours of Protestant missionaries. To this memoir is added a copious appendix of facts, supporting every part of it. It is well and faithfully done, and it has with your book (its precursor) my hearty prayers for success

As you are in the chair, I have the greatest hopes that this is a favourable time for the accomplishment of good purposes. The Governor-General, who read your book, has also had the outline of this in his hands, but he does not know the extent of what is now to be published. His most decided support may be depended upon, but I fear political animosities will prevent him from taking an active part in the business.

I have other matters to write you upon, which I purpose to do by the public packet.

I remain, &c.,

D. BROWN.

THE REV. D. BROWN TO C. GRANT, ESQ.

Calcutta, May 25, 1805

MY DEAR SIR,—

ON Saturday last, I received the orders of this Government for the reduction of the College of Fort William to a scale suitable to the present confined number of students.

It is now what the Court of Directors originally intended it to be, "a Bengal seminary, like unto that formerly under Mr. Gilchrist." If this event could have been foreseen, much trouble, much disappointment, and much expense might have been spared.

As I have formerly said, I am not a judge of the propriety or expediency of commencing on the grand scale we did, but the fruits proved all that could be expected or wished. The College rose in a few years to a degree of efficiency and splendour that could not have been anticipated. With this before his eyes, Lord Wellesley has deemed it proper to yield to the necessity laid upon him by orders from home, and to confine the studies of the present institution strictly to the three languages here in use. I shall for ever regret the fall of the Arabic, which, as Sir William Jones most truly observed, is the foundation of all Oriental literature; and the loss of the Sanscrit does not grieve me less, its utility being, in my mind, equal to what the Arabic was in Sir William Jones's.

It is impossible for me to describe the disheartening gloom now diffused over the College. The professors, students, and learned natives look on this revolution with amazement and concern.

"The glory is departed." But it is the will of God that this should have come to pass, and some wise end will, no doubt, be answered by it.

The following description may be applied, I think, as detailing with wonderful accuracy the former and present state of the College of Fort William.

"Behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven" (*rule Translations of the Scriptures*), "and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth; and the leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much."

"And one came down, and cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, . . . shake off his leaves, . . . and scatter his fruit."

"Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth"

After what has been already said on this subject, I find nothing further to suggest or add. But I thought it a duty to apprise you of the general feeling which has followed on this pruning operation

With regard to the future fate of the College, I leave it without prophesying either good or evil concerning it.

The stump may, I hope, hereafter flourish, contrary to all human appearances or expectations.

May its glory, honour, and brightness return ! May it be re-established ; and may excellent dignity be added unto it !

I am, &c. &c.,

D. BROWN.

[As an interesting sequel to the preceding correspondence relating to the rise and fall of the College of Fort William, and the conflict between Lord Wellesley and the Court of Directors of the East India Company, two letters are appended, bearing date thirty-six years later than the foregoing, which afford a remarkable illustration of the manner in which the "whirligig of time brings in its revenges," and teaches men "to labour and to wait"]

LORD WELLESLEY TO W. B. BAILEY, ESQ., AND GEO. LYALL, ESQ.

Kingston House, March 18, 1841

GENTLEMEN,—

So high is my estimation of the transcendent honour conferred upon me by the unanimous resolution of the whole body of the East India Company, that my first emotion was to offer up my thankful acknowledgments to the Almighty Power which has preserved my life beyond the ordinary limits of human nature, to receive a distinction of which history affords so few, if any, examples.

Three years have elapsed since this great and powerful body conferred on me a signal mark not only of honour but of generous and affectionate consideration. The wisdom of that great body does not deem the value of public services to be diminished by the lapse of time ; it is for weak, low, and frivolous minds, themselves incapable of any great action, to take so narrow a view of public merit. True wisdom will ever view time as the best test of public service, and will apportion its rewards accordingly. I therefore considered the former act of the East India Company as greatly enhanced in value by the deliberation which preceded it. The present consummation of their justice and wisdom is marked by the same spirit of deliberation, reflecting equal honour on those who confer, and on him who receives this high and glorious reward.

At my advanced age, when my public career must be so near its close, it would be vain to offer any other return of gratitude than the cordial acknowledgment of my deep sense of the magnitude and value of this unparalleled reward. May my example of success and of ultimate reward encourage and inspire all the servants of the East India Company to manifest a similar zeal and devotion to the service of the Company and of the British Empire in the East, and may their continued efforts preserve and improve to the end of time the interests of that great charge so long entrusted to my hands! Your congratulations on this occasion are peculiarly interesting to me.

The high character of Mr. Lyall, the Deputy-Chairman, and the distinguished place which he holds in the estimation and confidence of his fellow-citizens of London, must ever render his favourable testimony of the highest value to every public servant of the British Empire. But the Chairman, Mr Bayley, in his own person, furnishes the strongest practical instance of the true spirit, objects, and result of my system of administration in the government of India.

He was educated under my eye in the College of Fort William, founded by my hands, and conducted under my constant and close superintendence. He was employed for a considerable period of time in the Governor-General's office, an establishment intended for the express purpose of qualifying the civil servants of the Company for the highest offices in the State, by rendering them daily conversant with the whole system and detail of the office and duty of the Governor-General. Thus instructed, he obtained, most justly, a seat in Council, and held occasionally at the Presidency the office of Governor-General, with such distinction, that on his return to England he was elected into the Direction, and now most worthily fills the high station of Chairman of the East India Company.

To receive such a reward from such a hand at once enhances its value and confirms its justice. Mr. Bayley will, I trust, excuse this tribute to his character, which my duty of gratitude to the East India Company requires from me on this great and solemn occasion, on which I cannot use any terms which will convey my sentiments more correctly than those which I employed on a similar occasion in returning my thanks to the inhabitants of Calcutta on the 2nd of March, 1804, at the close of the war with the Mahratta chieftains.

The just object of public honours is not to adorn a favoured cha-

acter, nor to extol individual reputation, nor to transmit an esteemed name with lustre to posterity, but to commemorate public services and to perpetuate public principles.

The conscious sense of the motives, objects, and result of my endeavours to serve my country in this arduous station inspires me with an unfeigned solicitude that the principles which I never should be preserved for the security of the interests now entrusted to my charge, and destined hereafter to engage my lasting and affectionate attachment.

May, then, the Memorial by which you are pleased to distinguish my services remind you of the source from which they proceeded, and of the ends to which they were directed, and confirm the principles of public virtue, the maxims of public order, and a due respect for just and honest government.

I have, &c.,

WELLESLEY.

LORD WELLESLEY TO W. B. BAYLEY, Esq.

Kingston House, March 21, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Your most kind and affectionate letter of the 17th of March demanded an earlier reply, and should certainly have received earlier acknowledgments of gratitude and reciprocal affection, but that I really was so overwhelmed with the noble, most generous, and most affecting conduct of the Court, that I had not strength to write to you on the same day; besides, the nature (just and honest) of my letter to the Chairs necessarily led to topics which essentially conveyed my feelings on the subject of your most amiable private letter of the 17th.

In truth, I have ever considered my foundation of the College of Fort William and of the Governor-General's office, as my primary public service both in principle and result in principle, because its object was to provide public servants, qualified for their duty; in result, because it actually has produced you, with several others, Adam, Elphinstone, Metcalfe, Jenkins, Mackenzie, &c., who have fully justified all my intentions, hopes, and expectations from those institutions. I greatly admired the address which you have so aptly quoted, and the sentiments of which you have so faithfully and affectionately preserved in your excellent heart. Every trace of right feeling must depart from me before I can consider every part of this transaction as anything less than a solid ingredient of happiness and glory to my inmost soul, and as the eternal subject

of thanksgiving, and gratitude, and humble love towards the Almighty Disposer of all human events and ruler of all virtuous hearts I hear from everybody a very different account of your speech from that which you give the account given in all the newspapers contains everything to which my most eager hopes could aspire.

Ever, my dear sir,
Your most affectionate friend and obliged servant,

WELLESLEY.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON

PRINTED BY C WHITING, BLAUFOR HOUSE, STRAND